

KNOW THE MAN

Dr. Abrar Ahad Wani

Foreword by:

Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad Pampori

Syed Arshad Hussain Nadvi

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Foreword

Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi

The creator of the universe adored the Earth with innumerable creations. The vast sky, bright sun, brilliantly shining stars, huge mountains, green meadows, variety of plantation, ferocious animals, a variety of birds, dense forests, deep oceans with innumerable living beings in them; all and much more reflect the majesty of the Creator. These all infer the existence of lofty Creator. In this universe the best creation is the human being. He is the best example of the attribute of creation (Al-Khaliq). He is above all other creatures in bodily features, intellect, understanding, emotions and speech. He is the most respected creation and other creatures have been made subordinate to him. The creation has been presented by the Lord as an evidence of His creativity and this human being has been mentioned with exclusiveness. In holy Qur'an Allah ﷻ says,

وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

As also in your own selves: will ye not then see? (51:21)

This implies that inside our own bodies there are magnificent signs of the creativity of Lord, so why do not we have insight into ourselves?

In another verse, Qur'an puts forward the various

organs and their functioning as the evidence of the Lords creativity

وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful. (16:78)

In another verse this is mentioned as

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَمَّمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ
يَأْتِيَنكُمْ بِهِ

Say, "Have you considered: if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts, which deity other than Allah could bring them [back] to you?" (6:46)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَاوِنِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed, in that are signs for the persons having knowledge. (30:22)

All these verses explicitly reveal that a man right from his origin in the womb of mother to his death is seeing so many signs of the Creator in every stage of life. In spite of all this if he still refutes the existence of the Lord then it is the worst ignorance and foolishness.

Many so called intellectuals, who are atheists, are labelled as people who went astray because of their knowledge

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَى بَصَرِهِ
غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah? Then will you not be reminded? (45:23)

A small hut in a jungle reminds of its manufacturer, ready-made garment shop reminds of the tailor who is behind the scene, medical store reminds us of the years of hard work done by the manufacturers of the medicine, the exquisite cuisine in a restaurant tell us about the experience of the cook who has prepared them. The beautiful furniture speaks silently about the talent of the carpenter, every major factory reflects the expertise of the engineers who have manufactured their products. The lofty buildings remind us of the architects and the talented labor force behind them, the flying airplanes, sailing ships, complicated computers, mobile phones all reveal the magnificent manufacturers who are behind the scene. Every creation is an evidence of its creator. Anyone who says these have come in to existence of their own will be called a fool. Now when someone is of the opinion that the whole universe including everything in it, including human beings, have come into existence do novo has to be the real fool on Earth. Unfortunately, many of these consider themselves as genius but in reality they are the ones who have no intellect and or insight.

Who is a human being? Answer is that he is an explicit evidence of its Creator. If the human anatomy and physiology is read, keeping in mind the creativity,

magnificence, mercy, and knowledge of the creator, then it becomes a magnificent source of understanding the Lord. Next, pondering upon the its inner capabilities which in reality constitute the essence of human one can conclude the capabilities of understanding the purpose of life, and this stature can be achieved by man alone. In case a human being degrades himself to just eating, sleeping, constructing houses, fulfilling carnal desires and dying then he is no better than an animal, not worthy of being called a human. Holy Quran mentions,

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless. (7:179)

What is the essence of man? Dr Abrar sahib has written this book in order to enable a human being to become human in correct sense of term. Hopefully every reader will learn this lesson from this book. The value of the book can be grasped only after reading the book however if summary of the book can be explained by an example then this introduction should be read first.

There is a folk tale about a group of blind men who heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town, but none of them were aware of its shape and form. Out of curiosity, they decide to inspect and know it

by touch, of which they were capable. So, they sought it out, and when they found it they groped about it. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said, “This being is like a thick snake”. For another one whose hand reached its ear, it seemed like a kind of fan. As for another person, whose hand was upon its leg, said, “The elephant is a pillar like a tree-trunk.” The blind man who placed his hand upon its side said, “The elephant is a wall.” Now the person with normal vision revealed to them that they all had perceived the elephant on the basis of their understanding which was based on their limited knowledge of the portion of elephant which they had experienced. The essence of elephant was something different.

In a similar analogy, the specialists of various subjects of human body claim the human being is like so and so. After this a person who is fully equipped with faith, gnosis and understanding of reality comes forward and explains to everybody the real essence of man and the purpose of life. Dr Abrar sahib in his research has explored this essence and brought the real picture of man before everybody.

I pray to Allah ﷻ that this research becomes a source of cure for the diseased hearts, antidote for the poisoned minds and a means of correction for the perverted thoughts.

Aameen

Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi

Sheikh-ul-Hadith,

Chief Mufti of Darul Uloom Raheemiyah, Kashmir

Member All India Muslim Personal Board

Foreword

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad Pampori

It gives me an immense pleasure to see this wonderful endeavour by dear Dr Abrar Ahad in which he has touched one of the most important but highly complicated and philosophical topic viz., the essence of man. All through the history of mankind, the great thinkers have spent their lives to understand this mystery, the essence of man. The Greek as well as modern philosophers have toiled hard in trying to solve this mystery. However, when you deconstruct all that stuff you can easily conclude that they are all wandering in wilderness. Dr Abrar has put in lot of hard work and has extensively researched the literature of diverse fields. He has started from the anatomy and biology of man and of course, this was easy for him as this is his medical field, he being the renowned neurosurgeon of the state. However, his journey through the study of comparative religion, old and new philosophy and Qur'an and hadith and great Muslim saints and Muslim philosophers has been amazing. He has extensively quoted from Qur'an and hadith and tried his best to give Islamic perspective. I think this book will be greatly useful for understanding this difficult subject.

In the end, I would like to add that the great reality of life i.e., essence of man, cannot be understood only through

reading books, as the answer is not theoretical only but is mostly spiritual and spirituality is perceived, experienced and tasted which the words usually fail to express. There are enough indicators compiled by Dr Abrar in this book, which can guide the reader through reality. May Allah ﷻ accept this endeavour, reward him with His blessings, and make this book of great benefit to humankind.

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad Pampori

Rector: Darul-Uloom Ilahiya, Srinagar

Ex. Principal Govt. Medical College, Srinagar

Foreword

Syed Arshad Hussain Nadvi

Allah ﷻ created human beings as his vicegerents on Earth and right from the beginning he guided them, instructed them about how to live on the Earth according to his legislation and for their guidance he sent Prophets and bestowed them with his revelation.

All the prophets came with the same belief, creed, thoughts, vision, and aim and worked hard to call human beings towards the ultimate truth. Some of the people accepted their invitation while some refused to believe them and rejected them altogether. Those who refused their invitation stood up against their (Prophets') beliefs and concepts and created various confusions in the communities. With the passage of time, these confusions found ways to build different ways of life, and people started to adopt those different ways with their so-called 'explanations'.

However, Allah ﷻ continuously sent prophets under His guidance and command and they spent their days and nights spreading the Divine message with utmost confidence and without any hesitation. They faced and bore different kinds of troubles and hardships but never wavered in their belief and did not compromise in preaching Allah's word in any way.

Finally, Allah ﷻ sent his last and final prophet,

Mohammad ﷺ and his prophet hood shall remain until the day of judgement, that is, no one can be successful unless and until he / she follows the last and the final Prophet ﷺ. Nevertheless, as I mentioned above, people have already adopted different ways of life and they put forth their own explanations and philosophies. Most of the people do not have any concept of the hereafter or the sense of accountability and nowadays this trend is at its peak. We live in the so called 'modern era' where humans are deceived in different ways and made to believe that they have crossed the peaks of all the civilizations and developments and reached great heights in the field of education, science and technology and in developing the societies in most modern ways.

Unfortunately, it is all a deception, when we compare current societies with the past ones in terms of character, morals, humanity, spirituality and developing relations with other communities, we are absolutely nowhere.

To explain this, I think brother Dr. Abrar Sahib wrote this book "KNOW THE MAN" in which he has initially described man and his spirit scientifically, psychologically, philosophically and afterwards he has explained the concepts of different religions regarding man, particularly his soul or spirit. After giving the explanations of every religion, including the answers to questions that arise, he explains soul in the scientific way. Science is unable to give any discrete answer and he then goes on to explain the concept of soul in Islam.

Quoting different verses from the Holy Qur'an and sayings of prophet ﷺ and authentic luminaries of Islam, he differentiates between the soul and the physical body of human beings. Physical body is made of clay from the Earth while the soul is made without any pre-existing constituents

just by the order of Allah. Then he proves that human beings are the viceroys of Allah ﷻ on this Earth and explains the difference between soul- روح and self - نفس . When a man works hard on his own self according to the commandments of Allah ﷻ he is blessed with enlightenment. The author throws light upon the different stages of the obedient people of Allahﷻ, which are, prophets, truthful people, martyrs and pious people; as well as the disobedient people of Allah ﷻ and how they will be punished in the hereafter. Then he differentiates various levels of illuminations of the heart and describes the difference between a sick heart and a heart cured by following the commandments of Allah ﷻ as found in the real genius and illuminated people. They are the people who know their aims and objectives in this worldly life and work hard against their greed, selfishness, lust, hatred, and other dangerous human emotions and moral diseases.

The book is very beneficial for the existing and the coming generations that are impressed and affected by the western civilization, modern education and technology. After going through the book, one can feel the difference between the human brain and heart. Although science is the need of humanity and as far as religion is concerned, there are no prohibitions to learn science and rather religion supports scientific studies. However, there are many questions to which science has no answers and no one can solve those questions without following the real divine religion. I pray for the author of this book, may Allah ﷻ accept his work, make it treasure for him in hereafter, make this book beneficial for the readers, and give us tawfeeq to benefit from this book, Ameen.

Syed Arshad Hussain Nadvi

Scholar from Nadwatul Uloom Lucknow

Chairman Al Noor Model School

Chairman Foundation World School

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Allah, the Merciful, who, despite my lowly stature gifted me with all the resources needed for this book. The basic stimulus to my pen was from my mentor Dr Rafiq Ahmad Pampori, who in my teenage days in one of his individual advices for me touched this topic. It is now after nearly three decades that one phrase of his lead to the conceptualization of this book.

Without the physical and moral support of my family, this work was not possible. The editorial assistance provided by Dr. Shoib and Mr. Sameem is extraordinary.

I am highly indebted to all the authors who are mentioned in the reference section as in reality the book is a compilation of their work. May Almighty Allah bless all of them.

Preface

A traveler treading a lonely journey through a vast expanse of desert in search of an oasis happens to see a water at huge distance and on reaching nearby realizes that it was only a mirage. Once again, he strives to reach a destination where he can quench his thirst and the journey gets arduous. In the midst of his frustration, he wants somebody to catch hold of his hand and lead him straight to water. A human mind, whatever be his level of intelligence, does raise some intriguing queries about himself and all around him. Despite his never ending pursuit of mundane mirages of happiness he keeps on getting into the quagmire of hollowness within himself. If one is lucky, he gets a moment off from his routine curriculum and begins inquiring from himself, about who he is and where he is heading to. He sees around him so many people being born, attaining adulthood and dying. Doesn't this constant phenomenon need to be analyzed as one himself is a miniscule part of this mega event? Lack of questioning reflects a serious issue and that is the absence of intellect or the intellect being obscured by the bestial behavior of the person. When one studies himself, he finds himself an ocean unexplored because one is taught from his childhood to study what is around him and the wisest study is what is inside himself? But the problem does not end here. A study of himself is not a simple task as one might presume. Just a flight of bizarre thoughts about oneself doesn't make

one a master of the knowledge but it is something more. The question of what really a human being is, comes strikingly so often to mind in our medical specialty as in no other occupation. A relative of mine who was a senior bureaucrat and had so many people around him suddenly had a stroke for which he was operated and just in a day or so he was no more. I attended him right from his admission to hospital for surgery and finally funeral as well. The issue keeps on intriguing me, can a human being vanish so simply as if he did not exist? Or there is some missing link which is beyond the reach of medicine and hence medical professionals refuse to discuss. This is an experienced fact that one does not want to discuss what one does not understand. Such instances came so many times in my practice that a desire came in my mind to unravel this mystery with an unbiased mind and I will take you through some of my bizarre questions and their answers.

After graduating in medicine and finally became a surgeon of the human brain. The mystery of myself became more puzzled, as the realization of missing link being beyond my knowledge and experience got vindicated. This missing component was the real peril and all the study of medicine and human brain was the tip of an iceberg on which I had spent three decades of my life. The knowledge being searched seemed to be an ocean which is difficult to grasp but at the same time an argument arises that if it exists it can be known. Let me try my luck if my comprehension is able to grasp the costliest peril. In my quest I will be asking questions to various people who are supposed to be the ones knowing the subject. These include the ones who study human body under various categories like structure, function, chemical composition, physical laws, behavioral sciences and finally religious authorities.

At the beginning of the compilation of this work a disclaimer is needed that this subject needs immense knowledge both of literature and of intuition and both are severely deficient in me. To overcome this inherent weakness mention will be made of the references from which the material has been collected.

At last I pray to my Lord that He helps me in this task and leads me and you to the path which He has chosen for his beloved people.

Dr Abrar Ahad Wani

Srinagar

Human Being - A Biologist's Perspective

William Shakespeare wrote, “What a piece of work is man.” The human body is a marvel of the creation and it is one of the most elegant structure which cannot be constructed using best of resources available today. We have to study it in order to come to the conclusion which has been drawn above. Every organ is a masterpiece in itself and we will study them scientifically. However, the difficulty lies in simplifying the subject in order to make it readable to the general audience and yet effectively communicate the intricacies of the subject and this is going to be a real challenge. The study of the body is done under many subtitles but grossly under two headings namely, anatomy and physiology which was taught to me about three decades ago. So I will be going through these subjects and reproduce a simplest format to describe human body.

Cambridge English dictionary defines anatomy as, “The scientific study of the body and how its parts are arranged.” And physiology is defined as, “The scientific study of the way in which the bodies of living things work”. The human body can be studied at the macroscopic and microscopic levels. The former we can see with our eyes and the latter can be seen only after we take the assistance of various aids like

microscope.

On macroscopic level, the human body has nine systems and despite having separate jobs each system is made up of many organs all of which are interlaced with each other in such a way that each one is dependent on others and all of them function to maintain a body healthy . E.g., the long bones are principally a part of the skeletal but in addition to providing support they contain bone marrow which manufactures blood cells.

Musculoskeletal system - an ideal locomotive and supportive apparatus

Just like steel and cement columns provide framework of all the buildings, the basic framework of the body is provided by the musculoskeletal system which consists of bones, ligaments, tendons, cartilage and attached muscles. We have 206 bones and these bones can be grouped in two divisions: axial skeleton and appendicular skeleton. Axial skeleton which is composed of eighty bones forms the vertical axis of the body. They include the bones of the head, vertebral column, ribs and breastbone or sternum. The appendicular skeleton includes the limbs and their attachments to the axial skeleton, these account for 126 bones. The bones are joined to each other at joints which are exactly as we need them during our work. At some place these move in front and back direction (elbow) and at places they allow rotatory motion (fingers) and yet at places they are fixed (skull). The bones are not just a rigid column to body but are full of metabolic activities which are so essential to life. The function of skeletal system in addition to support are many.

They protect of all the organs inside our body. Depending on the strength of the organ, the appropriate protection is there. The brain is completely surrounded by bones all around while as intestines have no bony covering at all.

The bones are covered by muscles as seen obviously and it is the integrated action of joints, bones, and skeletal muscles that produces movements such as walking and running. Skeletal muscles also produce subtler movements that result in various facial expressions like smiling, frowning, eye movements, and respiration. In addition, skeletal muscles help in maintaining posture of the body, joint stability, and heat production. In addition to skeletal muscles which are under our control, we have a vast majority of muscles called smooth muscles which act of their own and help in important functions like digestion, and we are never aware of their existence. The heart consists of muscle called as cardiac muscle which is not under our control and it continues to beat all the time till we are living. A human being is busy doing all sorts of activities whether good or bad and numerous muscles are doing his work without him even being aware of it. So the muscles which we need for movement are under our control. Those muscles which if under our control will be a serious problem for our survival have been kept as so called 'autonomous' reflecting a serious plan to keep our body in optimal status. The bones are stronger than concrete (pound per pound) and many types of steel and yet so much lighter in weight. The variation in size is from a bone called stapes which is less than one fifth of an inch to femur which can withstand a load of more than 15 quintals. Where the need is, bones are fixed like in skull and where the need is, they are extremely mobile like ribs moving with every breath (about 5

million times in lifetime). If we compare the movement in a human and the best robot available today, we will be able to find that many robots can do the work of dozens of human beings and some can do the fine work better than humans but the hybrid of fine and gross movements with exact finesse as per the need of the hour is only possible in humans. The mechanism of muscle movement is simply astonishing. One just desires to say pick a cricket bat, the brain passes a signal through the nerves to the muscles and number of muscles get into action. Some contract while others relax to pick the bat, and once picked up it is gripped by fine muscles of hand. Then an array of electric signal pass back and forth between the brain and hand to manipulate the bat while playing and this is true for all of our day to day activities.

The bones in addition contain marrow which is the source of blood cells which have a diverse function to perform. Bones contain huge amounts of minerals which are important for its growth as well as for the various metabolic reactions in the body.

For all of the above activities the fuel needed is something called as ATP (adenosine triphosphates) which is produced by the cell using the energy sources provided by the digestive system from the food we take. This locomotive system is far better than most of the mechanical ones available to us on individual basis.

Nervous system - system for awareness

Brain is the controller of our body and is responsible for controlling, regulation and communication in the body. Despite such an important function, most of the facts about brain are still unexplored. The information we have about

brain is far less than what we do not have. This wonder of Creator, being an organ of about 1.5 Kilogram and 80 percent of it being water, hosts 100 billion cells (neurons) with electrical impulses travelling more than 150 miles per hour. It can hold enormous amounts of information and yet with a capacity to delete old unimportant memories, the capacity keeps on getting rejuvenated. The wonder organ, being the most sensitive, is located at the highest portion of the body, surrounded completely by the hard bones for the best protection.

Brain is the center of all mental activity including thought, learning, and memory. The nervous system keeps us in touch with our environment, it is composed of organs, principally the brain, spinal cord and nerves which carry out the complex activities of the nervous system. The system is responsible for both voluntary activities like eating, learning, movement and many involuntary activities like breathing, awareness. Brain receives information from the surroundings analyzes it and then responds accordingly. Hence main function of the system is reception of stimuli, interpret them and execute orders which are necessary.

The sensory receptors detect changes, called stimuli, occurring inside and outside the body like temperature, light, and sound from the external environment. Inside the body, receptors detect variations in chemicals, electrolytes, temperature. This information is called sensory input. This is converted into electrical signals called nerve impulses that are transmitted to the brain. The brain interprets them and based on the previous information understands them. Based on the sensory input and integration, the nervous system responds by

sending signals to muscles, causing them to contract, or to glands, causing them to produce secretions to produce the desired response.

When one tries to explain the working of brain it seems as if one is describing a computer. One is impressed by the man-made computer but as one understands the brain inside us, he has to admit that human brain is better than computer in many aspects. Though computer may excel human brain in the data storage, speed of calculations, designing, etc., but humans are exemplary in reasoning, imagination, and making decisions based on common sense. And above all it is the human brain who is making computers.

Digestive system - energy provider to body

The system is an amazing system of about thirty feet length beginning from mouth for intake of food to anus for excretion of unwanted material. In mouth we have grinding mechanism consisting of the teeth which break down the food, salivary glands provide enough liquid material to help the process and tongue provides the mixing component. The enamel of the teeth is one of the hardest natural material known to exist. The beauty of the system is that despite doing this job for years, teeth never chew the tongue or cheeks, nor the saliva damages this system. The tongue has about 10,000 taste buds for differentiating various tastes and yet such a small structure. The mixed partly broken food goes to stomach where it stays for some time and it is further digested both mechanically and chemically and yet stomach, which is so soft a structure, never digests itself. Then the food material moves down the intestines, with various glands like pancreas

adding enzymes. As it travels down, it continues to be modified and every useful substance gets absorbed at different places and harmful things move down. The liver takes care of these absorbed nutrients and converts them to more useful products and breaks down the harmful substances which had managed to move inside into the blood. The residual material is passed out as stool and for that the mechanism is so wonderful that one has not to do much efforts and yet the system is under his control so his clothes and body are perfectly clean.

Circulatory system - blood provider to body

The principal organ of this system is the heart, a lump of flesh with chambers inside for blood to come in and move out. Blood is pushed into vessels which are of various sizes and ultimately enable blood to reach the smallest and tiniest regions of the body as well. The network of vessels is so extensive that in one square inch we have three yards of vessels and if they are converted into a strand one can encircle the Earth 2.5 times. Veins collect blood low in oxygen from tissues throughout the body and take them to lungs for oxygenation and back to the heart for pumping and our heart pumps approximately 2000 gallons of blood daily by beating about a 70 times a minute for whole life. The heart continues to do like this for whole life without tiring and fault.

Respiratory system - oxygen provider to body

It consists mainly of the trachea, the diaphragm and the lungs. It has the principal functioning of taking in vital oxygen and expelling carbon dioxide in a process called breathing. The oxygen mixes with the blood through the

Know the man

extensive membranes in the alveoli of lungs (300-350 million in number) and from that go to whole of the body and it is here only that the carbon dioxide is exhaled out of body. The surface area of all these alveoli together is about that of one tennis court. This is going on without we being involved in the execution of the act and if a human being even wishes to stop breathing voluntarily, he cannot do so.

Reproductive system - developing progeny

The male reproductive system includes seminal vesicles, prostate, penis and the testes, which produce sperms. The female reproductive system consists of the vagina, the uterus and the ovaries, which produce eggs. There is desire to go to the partner and in this act the fluid (semen) is introduced into the female reproductive tract where it meets ovum (egg) leading to the development of new baby. Semen contains millions of sperms and only one gets chance to meet the ovum. It is estimated that the ovaries contain over 500,000 eggs, but only about 400 get the opportunity to create life and only a few really become precursor of life.

Urinary system - liquid waste removing system of body

The whole system includes two kidneys, two ureters, the bladder, and the urethra. Urine produced by the kidneys travels down the ureters to the bladder, and exits the body through the urethra. It helps eliminate waste products from our body. These wastes are produced from the breakdown of various substances in the body and this system maintains the fine balance of the water and electrolytes in our body. Each day, the kidneys process about 50 gallons of blood to filter out

about 1-2 liters of urine. Despite being such a robust system, the body does not just push the urine out but also with help of nervous system enables one to void in the desired place and at a desired time. And this control mechanism is so sophisticated that it cannot be described in this book.

Skin - a beautiful covering of the body

It is the largest organ of the body. It protects us from the outside world and also helps regulate body temperature and eliminate waste through perspiration. If we imagine a person with a transparent skin, it will be a dreadful and awful experience. We will be able to see all the systems working with all the secretions and waste products being collected in some organs and in place of having a loving feeling for one another, it will be an offensive feeling. The skin is the main component of the apparent beauty of a person. The skin is just of the thickness and texture as is needed at the respective places. It is thick at soles where it has to bear weight, it is fine with lot of sensitivity on eyelids where it has to protect fine structures like eyes. It has a number of receptors for pain, touch, temperature which help it in its functioning so it is not just a cover but an elaborate protective and concealing apparatus.

Endocrine system - hormonal control of the body

This consists of major glands that secrete hormones into the blood. These hormones, in turn, travel to different tissues and regulate various bodily functions, such as metabolism, growth and sexual function. The principal gland of this system namely pituitary gland weighs less than one gram and

controls or influences nearly all functions of the body. One is baffled by the way this controls our reproductive system, electrolyte and water balance, immune system just to name a few and in turn is controlled by brain by an extremely sensitive and complicated system.

Immune system - Defense system

It is the body's defense against bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that may be harmful. It includes lymph nodes, the spleen, bone marrow, the thymus and leukocytes, which are white blood cells. These detect any offending organism that gains entry into our body and quickly launches an attack on them which included many methods like producing antibodies against them or just devouring them. This is just like various weapons used by army against an adversary.

Blood - life providing fluid in body

The fluid flowing in all our vessels is blood. Nearly half of it is made of blood cells and rest of it is the fluid called plasma. A drop of blood contains about 5 million cells. It is the nourisher in the body and provides nutrition wherever it is required. It also cleans the tissues by removing the waste and toxic substances from them by supplying them to kidneys for removal. It contains mainly three types of cells namely red blood cells (which have the job of supplying oxygen to cells), white blood cells (which are concerned with defense of the body from various organisms), and platelets (which prevent excessive bleeding when there is injury).

On microscopic level, the cell is the basic structural, functional, and biological unit of all known organisms. It was in 1839 that the cell theory was coined by microbiologists

Schleiden and Schwann which mentioned that cells are the basic building blocks of life, all living things are made of cells and their products, new cells are created by old cells dividing into two, and cells are the smallest form of life; the functional and structural units of all living things. The cell is like a brick in a building and this itself is made up of an outer wall like structure which is a dynamic structure allowing only some substances to pass through and restricting most of others to do so. Inside the cell lies multiple organelles and each has separate function like storage of food (cytoplasm), production of proteins (endoplasmic reticulum), containing genetic material (nucleus), producing energy (mitochondria) and promoting cell division so as to increase the number of cells. So at any particular point of time millions of cells are being produced and millions are dying and the process is controlled by an extremely fool proof system so that the nature of new cells is perfect replica of the ones from which they are made. Our body contains several billion cells, organized into over 200 major types, with hundreds of cell-specific functions visible only under a microscope, with dimensions between 1 and 100 micrometers. The cell in brain (neuron) has entirely different function from that in liver (hepatocyte) but the beauty is that the basic structural organization is almost the same, it is the modification which makes the difference we see in different organs.

Human body – origin (embryology), the process begins with the fertilization in which male fluid (having the sperm cell) successfully fuses with a female egg cell (ovum). The genetic material of the sperm and egg then combine to form a single cell called a zygote and the germinal stage of development commences. The new genetic material is half

from father and half from the mother and hence commences the origin of the new individual. Embryonic development in the human, covers the first eight weeks of development; at the beginning of the ninth week the embryo is termed a fetus. The normal period of gestation (pregnancy) is nine months or 38 weeks. It is characterized by the process of cell division and cellular differentiation of the embryo that occurs during the early stages of development. In biological terms, the development of the human body entails growth from a one-celled zygote to an adult human being. This is a marvel of creation that all of us have been at one stage of our life a single cell for few hours. By 8 weeks miniscule limbs have formed and preliminary nervous system has formed. By 12 weeks, miniscule head, face with features and limbs are formed and its size is just 30 millimeters. The heart is pumping blood and we are a miniature human inside mother's womb. By 26 weeks most of the internal organs have been developed and by 36 weeks' complete body has developed and even nails have formed and child is ready for coming in this world. Inside the womb all the facilities for development are available under all the ambient circumstances and today, despite such a brilliant technology with us, this cannot be replicated in any machine or robot. When the tenure is over bodies of both the mother and the child undergo many rapid transformations to facilitate the exit of child in the new world and these changes when studied are simply astonishing. No sooner he is born the food needed is ready for him in the breasts of his mother, energetic, always fresh milk which caters to his all the demands for initial few months. The hormonal changes in his mother keep the supply continuous till it is needed by the child. The child has just to suck the

nipple and milk starts flowing till he is satiated. At present there is no substitute for the breast milk.

Introspection

In summary, for a biologist human being is an entity which is made up of cells which in turn make organs and organ systems as described till now. The regulation for all the cell growth, development and differentiation is by various chemicals like hormones and neurotransmitters which all are inside the body. When this concept is introspected there is a serious flaw. My origin was as a single cell which came into existence by the fusion of fluids from my parents and which then went through various stages inside the womb of mother and I was finally born and attained maturity till now. The biologist has no answer who is controlling the events as he is visualizing only the effect so he is not helping me in my quest. Next problem is, if my whole entity is cells and cells alone then with an exception of few tissues all the cells in human body are replaced at a very fast pace. So the trillions of cells present in me today are not the same which were sometime back. Does that mean the entity called me is changing after some time? If by accident I lose some body parts like my limbs are amputated, or I donate my kidney, will my entity change? No I will still be the same. So all above description of mine fails to answer my question; what is my real essence?

Human Being – Perspective of the Chemist

Everything in this universe is composed of basic elements which varies in different situations. Most of the human body is composed of water. About 41 chemical elements are commonly found in the body's construction and almost 99% of the mass of the human body is made up of six elements: oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, and phosphorus. Oxygen is the most abundant element in the human body accounting for approximately 65% of a person's mass followed by carbon which is about 18-20 percent of mass and Hydrogen is about 10%. Less than 1% of body is composed of another five elements namely potassium, sulfur, sodium, chlorine, and magnesium. Some of these elements are of absolute necessity for life while some have minor functions and some have no or doubtful role in our body. These elements perform various functions, including the building of bones and cell structures, regulating the acid base balance, carrying charge, and driving chemical reactions. So a human being can be divided on percentage basis between different elements and it sounds astonishing. These elements combine to form molecules and amongst them the principal ones are water, protein, fats, carbohydrates and DNA.

Water accounts for nearly 60 percent of human body and

is the principal component in the majority of the cells and extracellular component.

Lipids are the major structural components of the human body. Phospholipids and the steroid compound cholesterol are the major components of the membrane that surrounds each cell and maintains its integrity. Fats also have other important functions like providing energy reserve, and also serve as insulation and shock absorbers.

Proteins are an important constituent of the cell membrane and present in almost every organelle in body. Proteins also perform numerous functional roles in the body especially the chemical reactions necessary for life.

Carbohydrates are the principal source of energy most of the activities in body.

Nucleic acids are responsible for formation of the genetic material of the body. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) contains all the necessary information according to which each cell functions and it dictates the inherited characteristics of each individual human. Ribonucleic acid (RNA), of which there are several types, helps carry out the instructions encoded in the DNA.[5,6]

Albert Robertson in his book summarized living organisms as autonomous, self-propagating chemical systems made of distinctive and restricted set of small carbon-based molecules that are essentially the same for every living species. These molecules are composed of a small set of atoms linked to each other in a precise configuration through covalent bonds. The main categories of molecules are carbohydrates, amino acids, fatty acids and nucleotides. The molecules are attached to each other to form more complex substances with the help of

numerous complex interactions and all these are responsible for the maintenance of the complex functioning of cells.[5] The relationship between these is extremely important and the subtle balance which is there by innumerable pumps, transport systems and chemical reactions is mind baffling. Any subtle deviation can cause catastrophic changes in body. For example, there is approximately 80 mg of copper in the body, and copper, an essential trace element, plays several roles in human physiology, including the development of connective tissue, bone and nerve coverings, but chronic copper toxicity, while rare, can lead to liver damage, and acute copper intoxication can lead to severe gastrointestinal effects. The human body contains at least 60 detectable chemical elements, however, only about 25 of these elements are believed to participate in the healthy functioning of the human body. [7,8] These micro nutrients are so important that they are needed on daily basis and a recommended daily allowance (RDA) for elements is needed to safeguard against deficiencies. These include not only proven essential elements but also elements thought to be beneficial but for which essentiality has not been proved. It can also be argued that nutritional requirements should include consideration of the total health effects of nutrients, not just their roles in preventing deficiency pathology alone. Ultra trace elements with health benefits which are thought to merit specific RDAs include I, Se, Mn, Mo, Cr and B, as well as Co as vitamin B12. Elements with 'apparent beneficial intake' include Arsenic, Fluorine, Lithium, Nickel, Silicon and Vanadium. It has also been suggested that a healthful diet should provide an appropriate intake of Al, Br, Cd, Ge, Pb, Rb and Sn.

[8,9,10,11]

The acid base balance in the human body i.e., pH balance is one of the amazing things in body, it is maintained by an extremely complex system between pH 7.35– 7.45. The control of pH is achieved by buffering, for example, by carbonic acid (H_2CO_3)/bicarbonate in blood and by proteins. In tumor tissues, the pH can drop to 6–7, in lysosomes to 4–5 and in endosomes the pH drops to 5.5. Down the gastrointestinal tract, the pH shows a huge variation and the importance of this is overwhelming.[12,13]

The composition only is not important but their manner of packing, density too has been studied to be of importance A chemical approach to establishing human body density in vivo was developed by Hemsfield by combining recently developed noninvasive methods. He measured four compartments with specialized methods namely: protein (P; prompt-gamma neutron activation), water (A; $3\text{H}_2\text{O}$ dilution), mineral (M; dual-photon absorptiometry and delayed-gamma neutron activation), and fat (F; dual-photon absorptiometry). This reflects the complexity in every manner the matter is present in human and the relationship which is present amongst them [14]

The mechanism of energy production in cell is a complex and yet extremely well regulated system and is important for every function. Just as petrol is required by a car to move, a cell and in mega form, human body needs energy to perform every activity. The food particles are broken down by controlled stepwise process to provide chemical energy in the form of ATP and NADH. There are three main sets of reactions which occur in cells which lead to production of energy giving fuel. The processes include glycolysis (which

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occurs in the cytosol), the citric acid cycle (in the mitochondrial matrix), and oxidative phosphorylation (on the inner mitochondrial membrane). The intermediate products of glycolysis and the citric acid cycle are used both as sources of metabolic energy and to produce many of the small molecules used as the raw materials for biosynthesis. The energy once produced is utilized in an elegant manner and follows all laws of thermodynamics. Batato studied energetics of the human body vis-à-vis these laws. Using his study and other studies he proved that the laws of thermodynamics are equally applicable to human body as well.[15]

Transportation of chemicals in body is mainly dependent on cell membranes which are made of phospholipids, proteins and carbohydrates. These provide an effective barrier to all but the smallest molecules. The methods of transportation include mainly diffusion and active transport using transport molecules across the membrane. In diffusion water molecules can diffuse freely across a membrane, but always down their concentration gradient, so water therefore diffuses from a dilute to a concentrated solution. Within the cell are solutions of a number of different solutes. The more solutes there are, the less water molecules there are. This way, the concentration of water can also be described as water potential. Solute particles have a tendency to attract water molecules to themselves, reducing the potential of the water molecules to move. Therefore, the more solutes there are, the less potential the water molecules have of moving. In active transport the solutes move against the concentration gradient using highly specialized transmembrane molecules called transport molecules, utilizing highly sophisticated chemical reactions and their number cannot be estimated correctly in human body.[5,16]

Introspection

The above concept reduces a human being to a lump of chemical compounds which if subjected to breakdown leads to a few elements. These are not different from those elements seen in all the objects around me, whether living or nonliving. The above description of chemist baffles me, is all mankind just a heap of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen? How can a man be so stupid to consider himself such a stuff? The innumerable chemical processes and their precise control to the level of nano molecules with years of stereotypical fidelity raises many questions about the reality which is unseen to scientists. The latter are analyzing the process keenly but failing to realize the hidden processes controlling them.

No doubt science has proven that the chemical structure of human body is like this but there has to be some missing link between this reality and the ultimate truth about what is the real essence of man.

Perspective of Philosopher and Psychologist

These words apparently seem similar so we look into their meaning in the Cambridge dictionary.

Psychology is defined as ‘the scientific study of the way the human mind works and how it influences behavior, or the influence of particular person's character on their behavior.’

Philosophy is defined as ‘the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment.’

Once we move from the structural study of human being , one has necessarily to move to sublime study as the former failed to satisfy the thirst of the seeker. Hence the psychologist and a philosopher is approached to explain their concept of ‘I’. The former seeks to explain the entity using scientific methods while as the latter provides answers which cannot be explained with scientific background. He views the human being as essentially being self and divides self into ‘I’, the subjective knower, and the self as ‘Me’, the object that is known. [17] This concept plays an important role in understanding human mind, its working and social identity. Some of the psychologists assume phenomenal consciousness exists in nature, and that it is a part of the reality we live in. The main issue which comes up here is that when we consider

the phenomenal consciousness, it is always subjective and influenced by experience. This leads to the metaphysical problem of the self i.e., why is all conscious experience subjective, and what or who is the subject of this experience? This is the problem of the metaphysical 'I' as contrasted with the problem of the phenomenal 'I' (i.e., is there a distinctive experience of being a self as a subject of experience, and if so, then what is this experience?).

The existence of the metaphysical 'I' does not entail the existence of the phenomenal self. It is possible to imagine a creature that possesses a metaphysical 'I' but does not possess any sense of self. Such a case scenario will lead to a person being conscious but devoid of any feelings or emotions. [18]

So what is the essential of human being? Psychologists are of the opinion that it is a group of perceptions which a human being considers about himself like self-esteem. David Hume said that the self is nothing more than a bundle of perceptions. When we are studying self, there are many mechanisms going on to form it, like molecular, neural, psychological, and social. Most familiar is the psychological level applying to individuals, where we can talk about 'self-concepts' that people apply to themselves. This means if a person is asked as who he is, he may reply it by saying, a man, a traveler, an officer and so on. So the first idea that comes to him will be used to describe himself. The concept of self includes many dimensions like the nationality, gender, race, occupation etc. Understanding the basis of psychology is important but one needs to understand the deeper level of functioning at the molecular, neural and genetic levels which may unravel this understanding in future.[19] Donald

Winnicott distinguished what he called the ‘true self’ from the ‘false self’ in the human personality, considering the true self as one based on the individual's sense of being, not doing, something which was rooted in the experiencing body. [20]

In his transactional analysis theory, Eric Berne distinguished the real person is an assembly of various egos depending on his age and his past experiences. These consist of parent, adult and child ego. So Berne is of the opinion that a person is either in any of the states of three egos and can move from one state to other. By interacting with a person and assessing his way of talking, gestures, emotional behavior one can easily understand the state of ego he is in. [21]

In many societies, the self is viewed as a more-or-less integrated whole composed of abilities, values, personality attributes, references, feeling states, and attitudes. These personalized traits are always present with the person irrespective of the situation he is in. Depending upon different circumstances various attributes of the person may be activated but the core self seems to be unaffected by the external surroundings. The stronger is the self-more so it will be unaffected by the surroundings. [22,23]

If we elaborate the issues mentioned by the psychologists things will start getting difficult but the topic will be inadequate without mentioning the concept of Samuel Freud who saw the psyche is not physical nor has systems but is composed of three components namely, the id, ego and superego, all developing at different stages in our lives. In his hypothesis it is the psychic drives which are responsible for all the decisions which a human being makes in his life. He believed people are "simply actors in the drama of [their] own

minds, pushed by desire, pulled by coincidence. Underneath the surface, our personalities represent the power struggle going on deep within us". The id is the primitive and instinctual part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories. The morality part is played by the super-ego, and the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego is ego. The human being is an aggregation of all the three and their interactions. [24,25]

Freud considered God as a creation of subconscious thoughts and proposed various theories to explain his understanding of the inside of human being. He postulated Oedipus complex and Electra complex to explain the psychosexual forces working in a male and female child respectively. In human being there are three kinds of driving forces namely id, ego and super ego. The id is the pleasure seeking part of his subconscious mind and it is responsible for the basic drives in a human. It is only busy in gaining pleasure and immediate satisfaction. The ego is concerned with creating balance between pleasure and pain. The ego does not know the difference between right and wrong, but it is aware that not all drives can be met at a given time. Ego operates in order to help satisfy the id's demands as well as compromising according to reality. Super ego is concerned with the morality and it helps one to control the desires of the id so that they are acceptable in society. This enables one to differentiate between right and wrong and helps to create an ideal human.

Despite his exhaustive work and worldwide admiration when one comes to analyze the personal life of Freud, it becomes

vividly clear that a good amount of his work is based on his own personal experiences. In correspondence with his close friend Wilhelm Fliess, Freud confided that "the most important patient for me was my own person". Indeed, much of what we know about Freud has come from his communications with Fliess, a confidante and in many ways, his personal psychoanalyst, and from some 2,300 family letters and 1,500 love letters, well captured in a three - volume biography by Ernest Jones, Freud admitted that he had a childhood infatuation with his mother and harbored a hatred for his father, the primary rival for her affection. These self-observations were pivotal in the development of his famous Oedipus complex theory, and formed the basis of his profound work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1900. [26]

In contrast to psychologists, the philosophers studied the subject of the reality of man and elucidated numerous theories about it. In literature the earliest records about the reality of mankind can be traced to Greek philosophers. They worked extensively on the subject and wrote numerous books on this subject. Hylozoists (600 BC) were a group of philosophers who maintained that the essence of life is inseparable from matter. These included Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus. They considered soul as a substance like air or fire which brought life to body.

Pythagoras (500 BCE), laid an opinion that "ideas," images that existed or formed in the mind, as the basis of existence and opposed the hylozist group in their concepts.

Pyrrho of Elis (365-275 BCE) founded the school of 'skepticism' which considered the ultimate goal of human

life is to achieve happiness so they formulated various theories to achieve the goal.

Epicureus (341-270) formulated his hypothesis and believed that the ultimate reality is that everything is composed of atoms which are the generative seeds of the whole world. His belief was that human body has a soul but both are mortal and God exists but did not interfere in any natural processes which would go on as per the divine laws.

Amongst Greeks we have three names who produced maximum work on the subject namely Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. About the reality of man *Socrates* said, “Self-knowledge or knowledge about thyself is enough for good life or reasonable for best human nature.” He said that knowledge is virtue, so virtue can be achieved and unexamined life is not worth living, so one has to look for knowledge and wisdom, for good human nature. He believed true happiness came from doing good or right thing and the latter was possible only because of rational knowledge. He thought people do evil or bad thing because of lack of knowledge. Socrates believed in the existence of soul and even believed that the soul had parts with reason being located in the head, spirit in the top third of the torso, and the appetite in the middle third of the torso, down to the navel.[27,28]

Plato (427-347 BCE) did maximum work on this subject. He was the student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. He described Socrates concept of soul as:

“God is the source of wisdom Who encompasses all things, and the Spirit and Intellect of the whole universe. The human body is composed of material elements, while the spirit is an individual manifestation of the Universal Spirit. The spirit

controls the body in a way similar to God, being invisible, and ruling the whole universe. When one day the body decomposes, the spirit remains eternally.”

He, like his teachers laid great emphasis on reason and postulated that the successful life is possible due to structured reason. His writings are mainly teachings of Socrates. Plato argued that true understanding of human nature can lead to the absolute happiness or total satisfaction of life. Plato believed that human being consists of both immaterial mind (soul) and material body, and it is the soul that has various forms. Plato believed the soul exists before birth and after death. The soul is divided into 3 parts: reason, appetite, and passion. Plato considered human beings as rational, social animals. In Plato's analysis human beings are rational and social creatures. He believed in the concept of immortality of the soul and postulated that who we are depends on what kind of a soul we have—a philosopher soul, a guardian or warrior soul, or an artisan soul.

Democritus (460 –370) proposed the thought that the soul may be a kind of hearth or hot substance; his 'forms' or atoms are infinite in variety and compares them to the motes within the air that we have a tendency to see in shafts of sunshine coming back through windows. He thought that the soul was the power to initiate movement in man.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) laid the foundation of Lyceum academy and initially taught the concepts of Plato but later on started propounding his concepts. Amongst his numerous works we are interested in his explanation of reality of man. In his description of objects, he does so under two headings, “the form and matter” and proposes that all the living beings

are composed of both. Soul was considered as being the ‘form of living being. One of his works titled ‘On the Soul’ (peri psyches), there is description of three kinds of soul (‘psyches’): the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul, and the rational soul. It is the rational soul which is present in humans which incorporates the powers of the other kinds and it lies in heart. Human soul resembles vegetative soul in that it can grow and nourish itself meanwhile like the sensitive soul it can experience sensations and move locally. The special feature of the rational soul present in man is its ability to receive forms of other things and to compare them using the intellect and reason. Aristotle places the spirit in different categories. However, according to him, the spirit is created with the body and returns to its origin after the death of the body. It experiences a process of perfection during the life of the body, and on reaching perfection, it gains resemblance to the Divine Being and continues to live in pleasures that are particular to itself. In some works of his there is an impression that the soul is mortal and a part of it, which is an active part of soul is immortal. [29,30,31]

Plotinus (205–270 CE) tried to establish a somewhat eclectic school of thought, but he arrived at some sort of mysticism. Plotinus taught the existence of an transcendent God, from Whom emanated the Intellect; from the Intellect a Universal Spirit emanated. Both the Intellect and the Universal Spirit are included in the Divine Being. *Neoplatonism* also teaches that all people return to the Source. The Source is where all things spring from and is where all things return. The human spirit or soul is a part of the Universal Spirit, and its perfection means its final union with

the spirit. According to Neoplatonism, the human spirit accomplishes this union by contemplation and acts of spiritual refinement. A spirit turning to God obtains love with these acts and contemplation and is immersed in spiritual pleasures, forgetting all pain and suffering.

Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650), a French philosopher and mathematician, is an important philosopher in the development of Western philosophy. His philosophy was built on the idea of radical doubt, in which nothing that is perceived or sensed is necessarily true. The only thing that remains true is that there is a mind or consciousness doing the doubting and believing its perceptions, hence the famous formulation, ‘*I think therefore I am*’, or in Latin, the ‘*cogito— ‘Cogito ergo sum*’. Descartes also proposed that the mind and body were two separate and distinct entities, but even the body was not so certain a thing as the mind, because, like everything else in the world, the body could only be sensed because there was a mind to sense it. He suggested that our mind and thoughts are our true identity. He said,

“... Perception is neither an act of vision, nor of touch, nor of imagination ... but only an intuition of the mind, which may be imperfect and confused ... or clear and distinct ... according as my attention is more or less directed to the elements which are found in it, and of which it is composed ...”[32]

Fakhr ud din Muhammad Umar al Razi (1149- 1209) famous in West as Rhazes was from Iran and has exhaustively worked on the subject and wrote a master piece work namely ‘*Kitab u Nafs*’ on this subject. In this he

proved,

“ the immateriality of the human soul is based on the premise that the soul is one. Whenever we point out a particular person or identify ourself, we always intend a single entity rather than multiple entities. It is necessary that the soul is not an expression of any part of the body. The proof for this is that we necessarily know that there is no single part of the body that in itself can be attributed by sight, hearing, tasting, thinking, and memory. Rather, it has been understood by the mind from the outset that sight is peculiar to the eye, and the same statement can be said of other perceptions and actions. Now if it is said that there exists in the body a single entity, then this part must specifically characterize all of these perceptions and actions. We know necessarily that such a part is non-existent. Now it has been established that the human soul is a single thing that is characterized by these perceptions and the totality of these actions.”

He writes that if a human being were just an expression of the body then their various attributes such as life, knowledge, power and volition would have to either exist in every part of his body or not. Self-awareness subsists even when the body undergoes perpetual change. Here he adds some more observations of physiological change in the human being, e.g. the liquid substance that comprise much of the human body evaporates when it produces bodily heat, etc. However, despite these physical changes, the ‘I’ that we identify to be our self, say twenty years ago, was the same then as it is now. Thus ‘I’ which is self-awareness despite the physical changes is not dependent on external influences. Once again he emphasizes that whenever we verbalize our

Know the man

actions such as ‘I have thought’ or ‘I have heard,’ we are at that moment forgetful of our other organs like brain, ears etc., which are related to the functions of the action. He is of the opinion that the man is not created in order to occupy himself with the satisfaction of his bodily pleasures, but rather to achieve eternal bliss by contemplation of the divinity.[33]

John Locke (1632-1704) argued that momentary thoughts are not consistent and change over time. So our identity cannot be just our thoughts and something else that are consistent over time. For example, I am myself and not another person because I remember being myself as a little child, as a teenager and as an adult. He termed this consistency of memory, “sameness of consciousness”.[34]

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), a German philosopher is one of the modern psychologists who tried to explain the innate nature of man. His concept was predominantly based on nihilism i.e., the rejection of all religious and moral principles, in the belief that life is meaningless. Nietzsche was of the opinion that one must be exemplary and create ones identity through self-realization without relying on anything transcendental whether it is God or a soul. He suggested the man has ‘will to power’ and this is the driving force in the man which makes him to live. He gave the theory of ‘Eternal return’ which states that the universe and all existence and energy has been recurring, and will continue to recur, in a self-similar form an infinite number of times across infinite time or space. His concept was that the enlightenment of man will lead to the concept of ‘killing of the God’ basically his concept of atheism which is clearly

depicted in his works. According to some commentators, Nietzsche advanced a cosmological theory of “will to power.” Regarding self he stated, *“Owing to the phenomenon of ‘thought’, the ego is taken for granted; but up to the present everybody believed. . . that there was something unconditionally certain in the notion ‘I think’, and that by analogy with our understanding of all other causal reactions this ‘I’ was the given cause of the thinking. However customary and indispensable this fiction may have become now, this fact proves nothing against the imaginary nature of its origin; it might be a life-preserving belief and still be false. {Will to Power; 483}”*. But others interpret him as not being overly concerned with working out a general cosmology. Despite his exemplary acceptance in west, the hard fact is that he had a very disturbing life of a dejected lover, and became mad due to stroke like illnesses just at the age of 40 years and was living a dependent life being cared by his mother and sister. [35,36]

Jeremy Bentham proposed the concept of ‘utilitarianism’, which states that the man is under the governance of two sovereign masters namely pain and pleasure. Then, from that moral insight, he derived the Rule of Utility which states that the good is whatever brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. He defined the meaning of life as the "greatest happiness principle". [37]

Sir Muhammad Iqbal was one of the great philosophers of the recent past who had imbibed deep knowledge of the western philosophy and had mastered the subject. After returning from Europe he did a comprehensive analysis of

the Muslim society and wrote some beautiful treatises on the subject of self. His concept of self is so called 'khudi' which means individual personality or selfhood. His opinion was that one has to increase his self esteem in order to be productive in life and this was in stark contrast to Platonic view and even the view of most of the mystics who promulgate the concept of self annihilation in order to achieve salvation. Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained center, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the most complete person. [38]

Existentialism was a concept proposed by philosophers to explain the main attribute of human being. In seeking meaning to life, the existentialist looks to where people find meaning in life. But they base their decisions only on reason and this leads to confusion, anxiety and often feeling of doom. [39]

Pantheism maintain that the spirit and body are the same entity, both being a single manifestation. Being one of the foremost representatives of this trend, Spinoza claims that the Divine Being is identical with the universe. There is nothing of substantial reality other than the Self-Existing and Self-Subsisting One. The real existence is infinite and eternal, having infinite attributes and forms or reflections. This is the reality of what we call existence. The spirit and body are a combination that forms the absolute essence or being.

This view superficially resembles some of the utterances which certain Muslim Sufis asserted about the Unity of Being while in a state of spiritual absorption or intoxication. But these two approaches are radically different from one

another. Asserting the unity of existence or claiming that the Divine Being is identical with the universe is one thing, while absorption in the Existence of the Divine Being in utter neglect of the universe is yet another. The former is heresy as per Islam while the latter concept is reasonably fine. [39,40]

Introspection

When a common reader like me will read above, which is a simplified form of huge jargon of articles, which I tried to grasp with my focus being on the question with which we had started, and that was to unravel our real essence. Unfortunately, the psychologists and philosophers confused me more than they could help. Was this the deficiency in my IQ or the reality is that they too have failed to reach the sublime depths of this reality. The human essence is far above the instincts that have been described by them. This can hardly be the reason for the creation of the marvelous mankind and the feeling of a great treasure being just missed by them creeps into my mind and that is the force for continuing work on this project. Now the need arose to move to people of metaphysics and religion so my journey continues.

Essence of Human in Religion

When the vexing question of reality of human being is presented to the religions, nearly all are unanimous that the essence of man is an entity called the soul and the body is a temporary entity. In order to investigate the issue further one can divide the religions into two broad categories, Abrahamic ones (Christians, Muslims and Jews) and non-Abrahamic ones (Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some smaller sects).

Let us first try to define soul. It is defined in Cambridge dictionary as:

“The spiritual part of a person that some people believe continues to exist in some form after their body had died, or the part of a person that is not physical and experiences deep feelings and emotions.”

Non Abrahamic religions- mostly Indian in origin

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism we find many similarities as far as the concept of soul is considered. In Hinduism it is called ‘Atman’, in Buddhism it is ‘Anatta’ and in Jainism it is ‘Jiva.’ Though there are differences between the Hindu and Jain schools of thought and some subtle differences even amongst the subgroups of each but the essence is same. The soul is the real essence of the person and is devoid of any matter and it undergoes the cycle of rebirth once a person dies.

"At the moment of birth the spirit soul enters a material body and at the moment of death the soul leaves the

body." [Chandogya Upanishad (6.11.3)]

In Hinduism, this quality of life after rebirth depends upon the deeds 'karma' a person has done. In order to attain liberation (moksha), from this cycle a human being must acquire self-knowledge (atma jnana), which is to realize that one's true self (atman) is identical with the transcendent self-Brahman. In both categories of souls, the attributes are the same but in the former these are completely manifested and in the latter they are partially so.

"At the time of death the soul reaps the results of his works.

He goes to the world where he deserves to go. When the results of his past deeds are exhausted, again he returns to the middle planets, the world of karma."

When he returns to the world of Karma, he has to accept another body. [(Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad (4.4.6)]

Bhagavad Gita, which is compilation of the facts from Upanishads, mentions this.

Every born person has to die and every dead person has to take birth again.

In Vedas, it is the Soul which makes a person separate and distinct individual. The Spirit is the cause of social being of a person, the cause of good or bad actions of the individuals. The right path is only known to the manifested soul (jivatma), which is nearest on self-realization and when it pollutes itself with the material world it distances itself from the reality. It is the Creative force, which hides behind all animate and inanimate objects in the universe. The soul is described as the *master or lord of the human body and it is here God resides making human being a divine entity*. There are many features present in soul like mind, will, intellect,

and ego. When one is grossly involved in sinful activities both bodily and spiritually, then the soul starts degenerating and gets weaker and weaker with time. The soul in its pursuit to become Godly tries to achieve perfection with time.

Mundaka Upanishad states:

“This subtle Atman should be known by the mind as being in the body, whose prana entered in five different forms; the mind in all creatures is pervaded by these pranas. When it is purified, then the Atman shines out of itself.”

[Mundaka III, Khanda I9 (Sankara Bhaṣya.)]

Sri Shankara’s commented on this Atman as a subtle entity which should be known by the mind, i.e., by the mere intellect purified. Mind in all creatures is pervaded by the pranas and the senses, as milk by oil, and fuel by fire. When intelligence is purified of all the worldly things, atman shines out without any further efforts.

Chandogya Upanishad also states that although the body withers and dies when the self or soul leaves it, the living self does not die. (6.11.3) It further goes on to explain that the self is free from sin and old age, death and grief, hunger and thirst, lamentation and sadness, and all forms of bodily identification. (8.1.5-6)

According to Bhagavad-Gita when the body is administered by the manifested soul, it achieves the stage of perfect control of the body called as ‘Chhavo’ or ‘Shava’

*“Even the human beings become Brahma and can say
“Aham Brahman Asi”- I am Brahman.”*

One of the Hindu scholars namely Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi while elaborating on the subject of the essence of man says, “The gross body is composed of the seven

humours (dhatus), the five cognitive sense organs, the five vital airs (prana) and the mind.” He negates all them as being the essence of human being. After negating all of the above-mentioned, Awareness alone remains—about which he says, “That I am”. The world, the individual soul, and God are appearances in it like silver in mother-of-pearl, these three appear at the same time, and disappear at the same time. The Self is that where there is absolutely no “I” thought. That is called “Silence”. The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is “I”; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self. From this discussion it appears that the realization of this school of thought is that the true essence is an entity called self and possibly it is the God.

Svetasvatara Upanishad in its eighth mantra describes the soul as,

Know the embodied soul to be a part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair divided a hundred times; and yet it is infinite.

The subtlety of soul is again elaborated here. It is described as smaller than the billionth part of the end of hair. This is just a simile and not to be taken literally. In spite of being so subtle, soul is pervasive in any gross object. In a nutshell, the implication is that although Paramatman (Cosmic Self) is permeating the entire universe, when it is associated with the physical bodies, it gets individualized and feels itself separate from the Cosmic Self. [41,42,43,44,45]

"At the moment of birth the spirit soul enters a material body and at the moment of death the soul leaves the body."

[Chandogya Upanishad (6.11.3)]

Jainism denies the existence of God as the creator of the

world and admits the reality of the world is the permanent souls which are heterogeneous in their nature. According to Jainism a 'Jiva' or a soul is a *conscious substance which is eternal* and accepts changes. All living beings whether plants, animals or human beings have souls within them, but soul of man is most developed, because consciousness in it is the most manifest. They consider the Man's soul as an embodiment of all perfection and having the potential of infinity in all aspects. The soul is not absolutely infinite but is co-extensive with body and can immediately know objects only within the body. The knowledge, pleasure, suffering are all because of the soul. The soul is either liberated or mundane. Karma is subtle matter which enters into the soul and causes its bondage and it is the link which unites the soul to the body. The bondage occurs due to anger, pride, infatuation and greed. These bad virtues are called Kasayas, which are responsible for causing bondage between immortal soul and mortal body. The nature and number of material particles attracted by the soul depend on its Karma and these particles themselves come to be called Karma-matter or even simply karma. The Jainism speaks of the many karmas and names each after the effect it produces. The ignorance leads the soul to be associated with matter and this ignorance can be removed by studying the teachings and scriptures of Tirhankaras. The ignorance can be removed only by possessing right faith right knowledge, and right conduct (three jewels or Triratna of Jainism). The escape of the jiva from matter is liberation. Dissociation of the soul from matter is moksha or liberation, which can be attained by complete elimination of the matter with which the soul has become

already mingled. The first process is called ‘samvara’ (i.e. the stopping influx of karma) and the second ‘nirjara’ (i.e. wearing out of karma in the *soul*).[46]

In Buddhism, there is no concept of God or soul. They do not believe in a God. Buddhists believe that life is both endless and subject to impermanence, suffering and uncertainty. There is the concept of Anatta, (Pali: “non-self” or “substanceless”) which in Sanskrit is ‘anatman.’ As per this concept there is no permanent discrete ‘soul’ and that the realization of this truth is enlightenment. This is in significant departure from the concept of Hinduism where ‘atma’ is described. The concept of anatta (absence of a self), anicca (the impermanence of all being), and dukkha (“suffering”) are the three characteristics of all existence (ti-lakkhana). Recognition of these three doctrines—anatta, anicca, and dukkha—constitutes “right understanding” and these characteristics are mentioned in verses 277, 278 and 279 of the Dhammapada. They have the concept of rebirth and only few enlightened ones’ escape from this journey of rebirth and achieve ‘nirvana’.

Some subjects describe there are three mind. Very subtle mind, which does not disintegrate in death (this continues to with phenomena eternity and its new state depends on its current actions). Subtle mind or unconscious mind, which disintegrates in death and gross mind, which does not exist when one is sleeping. Therefore, gross mind is less permanent than subtle mind, which does not exist in death.

One of the scholars mentions this as:

“In its denial of any real permanent Soul or Self, Buddhism stands alone. This teaching presents the utmost difficulty to

many people and often provokes even violent antagonism towards the whole religion. Yet this doctrine of No-soul or Anatta, is the bedrock of Buddhism and all the other teachings of the Buddha are intimately connected with it. The Buddha is quite categorical in its exposition and would have no compromise. In a famous passage He declares, "Whether Buddhas arise in this world or not, it always remains a fact that the constituent parts of a being are lacking in a Soul," the Pali word used for "Soul" being Atta." [47,48]

Sikhism was founded in 15th century and shares many philosophical concepts with Hinduism such as Karma, Dharma, Mukti, Maya and Samsara but is different from it in being monotheistic religion. The holy book of the Sikhs namely Guru Granth Sahib has tried to explore the essence of human being and explained the composition of human being as being of three components, mind, body and soul which are all intertwined for healthy well-being. Regarding soul, they believe it was placed by the omnipresent (Guru) inside the human body.

He placed the soul in the body which He had fashioned.

He protects the Creation which He has created.

With their eyes, they see, and with their tongues,

they speak; with their ears, they bring the mind

to awareness. With their feet, they walk,

and with their hands, they work; they wear and eat

whatever is given. They do not know the One

who created the Creation. The blind fools do their

dark deeds. When the pitcher of the body breaks

and shatters into pieces, it cannot be re-created again.

O Nanak, without the Guru, there is no honour;

without honour, no one is carried across.

(SGGS, M.1, Ang 138)

Human body is considered as the carrier of soul (atma) which is the real essence of a person and it is intensely related with the God (parmatama) and the two are indistinguishable. If the relationship is not established, then the person is as good as dead.

*He gave me body and mind, and infused consciousness
into my being. (SGGS, M.1, Ang 1027)*

*The Lord is in the soul, and the soul is in the Lord. This is
realized through the Guru's Teachings.*

(SGGS, M. 1, P. 1153)

*His soul and the Supreme Soul become one. The duality of
the inner mind is overcome. (SGGS, M. 1, P. 661)*

The development of the relation between soul and creator is the ultimate goal of spirituality. The mind needs to be awakened by giving up its bad qualities like pride and ego and this marks the realization of the ultimate truth. The mind gets associated with the consciousness of God.

*O mind, you are so full of pride; loaded with pride, you shall
depart. The fascinating Maya has fascinated you, over and
over again, and lured you into reincarnation. Clinging to
pride, you shall depart, O foolish mind, and in the end, you
shall regret and repent. You are afflicted with the diseases of
ego and desire, and you are wasting your life away in vain.*

*The foolish self-willed manmukh does not remember the
Lord, and shall regret and repent hereafter. Thus says
Nanak: O mind, you are full of pride; loaded with pride, you
shall depart. (SGGS, M. 3, P. 441)*

Hence in Sikhism the essence of a person is his soul which undergoes cycle of rebirths and can achieve freedom

from these and get united with God like a drop of water in ocean provided one strives for it. Guru Nanak states, “The body takes birth because of karma, but salvation is attained through grace”. The grace has been mentioned as ‘mehar’, ‘nazar’, ‘kirpa’[49,50,51]

*If your soul overcomes the five elements, then you shall come to have
a home at the true place of pilgrimage. (SGGS, M.3, Ang 491)*

Believe it -you shall merge once again into the One,

O Nanak, from whom you originated. (SGGS, M.9, Ang 1427)

*Those who understand their own souls, are themselves the Supreme
Soul. (SGGS, M.1, Ang 421)*

Abrahamic Religions (People of the Book)

Judaism

All the people of the Book believe in the presence of the soul, its origin by the creator and its immortality. Since Judaism is one of the oldest in this group so this is described first. Some references from Torah will elucidate the concept.

As long as the soul was conceived to be merely a breath ('nefesh', 'neshamah', 'anima'), and inseparably connected, if not identified, with the life-blood (Gen. ix. 4, comp. iv. 11; Lev. xvii. 11;), no real substance could be ascribed to it.

As soon as the spirit or breath of God ('nishmat' or 'ruah' 'hayyim'), which was believed to keep body and soul together, both in man and in beast (Gen. ii. 7, vi. 17, vii. 22; Job xxvii. 3), is taken away (Ps. cxlvi. 4) or returns to God (Eccl. xii. 7; Job xxxiv. 14), the soul goes down to Sheol or Hades, there to lead a shadowy existence without life and consciousness (Job xiv. 21; Ps. vi. 6 [A. V. 5], cxv. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 18; Eccl. ix. 5, 10).

In Genesis (2:7) it is mentioned that the God formed

man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils a soul-breath of life (nesheema). Man [thus] became a living creature (Nefesh). So soul is the main force behind the functioning of body.

"The life-force of the flesh is in the blood" [Leviticus (17:11)]

The concept of the body decomposing and the soul continuing to live can be seen in Torah as, "The dust returns to the dust as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it" [Ecclesiastes (12:7)]

Once a person dies his soul yearns for the body as it sees the decomposition setting in it and is pained to see it go, Talmud thus teaches us that "Worms are as painful to the dead as needles in the flesh of the living, as it is written [Job (14:22)]

The Jewish authorities categorize the soul into various grades depending upon their emancipation.

Nefesh: vital element that enters the body at birth; it dominates the physical and psychological aspects of the self.

Ruach: comes into being when a person can overcome the body and its desires and it is thus associated with the ethical aspects of life.

Neshamah: it is the highest part of the soul and is produced through study of the Torah and observation of the commandments. Torah study awakens the higher centers, through which the individual attains the capacity to apprehend God and the secrets of creation.

Later on some authorities especially from Kabbalistic background which were active in adding esoteric component to teachings added two more varieties namely,

Hayyah: The part of the soul that allows one to have an

awareness of the divine life force itself.

Yehiddah: The highest plane of the soul, in which one can achieve as full a union with God as is possible.

According to *Kabbalah*, the nefesh, ruah, and neshamah have different destinies after death. The nefesh hovers over the body for a time; the ruah goes to a terrestrial realm assigned according to its virtue, and the neshamah returns to its home with the divine. Only the nefesh and ruah are subject to punishment.

The above mentioned varieties of soul are accepted by most of the scholars, a few have added some more namely:

Ruach Ha Kodesh: a state of the soul that makes prophecy possible. As per this view as of today no one (outside of Israel) can receive the soul of prophecy any longer.

Neshamah Yeseira: this soul can be experienced by a Jew on Shabbat. This can give a person an enhanced spiritual enjoyment of the day.

Neshamah Kedosha: Provided to Jews at the age of maturity if they study and practice Torah.

One of the great Kabbalistic text namely ‘Zohar’ mentions the origin of types of the soul as the emancipation of various degrees of God (sefirot)

Nefesh originates in the sefirah Malkhut (‘kingdom’), the lowest emanation, which corresponds to the Congregation of Israel. After death it hovers over the body for a time.

Ruah originates in Tiferet (‘grandeur’), the central sefirah, also known as Rahamim (‘mercies’). After death it goes to a terrestrial realm assigned according to its virtue.

Neshamah emerges from the third sefirah, Binah ('understanding'). After death it returns to its home with the divine only the nefesh and ruah are subject to punishment.

Reincarnation was not an original concept taught in Torah however as the kabalistic moment gained momentum this slowly crept into Judaism. It was Isaac Luria, who systemized it and through Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidic Judaism, reincarnation entered popular Jewish literature.

Zohar refers to the doctrine in a number of passages. Nahmanides [1194-1270], in his commentary to the Book of Job (Job 33:30), explains that the concept of reincarnation as a great mystery and proposes that this can explain many intriguing biblical passages. The belief in the transmigration of souls is present in many Kabbalists and they endeavor to explain the soul as a light from heaven, (after Prov. xx. 27), and immortality as a return to the celestial world of pure light.

However, many scholars openly criticized it. One of them writes as, "Yet I must say that I have found certain people, who call themselves Jews, professing the doctrine of metempsychosis, which is designated by them as the theory of the 'transmigration' of souls. What they mean thereby is that the spirit of Reuben is transferred to Simeon and afterwards to Levi and after that to Judah. [These names are generic, like Tom, Dick and Harry; no reference to the sons of Jacob is intended. Ed.] Many of them would even go so far as to assert that the spirit of a human being might enter into the body of a beast or that of a beast into the body of a human being, and other such nonsense and stupidities." (Saadiah)

The prevailing rabbinical conception of the future world is that of the world of resurrection, not that of pure immortality. Resurrection became the dogma of Judaism, fixed in the Mishnah (Sanh. x. 1) The soul is destined for immortal life. Abraham is told by God, "*Depart from this vain world; leave the body and go to thy Lord among the good*" (Testament of Abraham). The immortality of martyrs was especially dwelt on by the Essenes (Josephus, "B. J." vii. 8, 7; i. 33,. *The souls of the righteous live like birds in cages guarded by angels* (IV Esd. vii. 32, 95; Apoc. Baruch, xxi. 23, xxx. 2; comp. Shab. 152b). The soul of martyrs also has a special place in heaven, according to Enoch (xxii. 12, cii. 4, cviii. 11 *et seq.*); whereas the Slavonic Enoch (xxiii. 5) teaches that every soul was created for eternity before the foundation of the world. [52,53,54,55,56,57,58]

Soul in Christianity

The Christians have almost similar belief as in Jews and beliefs of soul in Old testament have been described in previous sections. In the New Testament the word 'soul' is sometimes used to translate the Greek word '*psyche*'. It is similar to the words *nephesh* used in old testament *referring to life*, person, mind, heart, and self. The origin of the soul is debatable in Christianity. The major theories put forward include traducianism, soul creationism, and pre-existence. Traducianism describes that the soul comes from the parents by natural generation. In the concept of soul creationism, God creates each individual soul directly, either at the moment of conception or some later time. According to the preexistence theory, the soul exists before the moment of

conception.

At many places soul refers to the person in entirety like:

Eight souls were saved in Noah's ark (Peter 3:20)

Joseph sent and called his father Jacob, and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people (Souls)

[Acts (7:14)]

Sometimes soul is used for the center of emotions like;

Sword will pierce Mary's soul, which describes the emotional pain in observing her son's death. [Luke 2:35]

The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds (psuche) against the brethren. [Acts (14:2)]

Paul urged his readers to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind (psuche) [Philippians (1:27)]

They also believe in the soul being immortal and leaving the body on death. Protestants generally believe in the soul's existence, but fall into two major camps about what this means in terms of after life. One group (Calvin) believes in the immortality of the soul and conscious existence after death. Other group (following Luther), believes in the mortality of the soul and unconscious "sleep" until the resurrection of the dead. The Catholics are of the belief that the existence of each individual soul is dependent wholly upon God. The doctrine of the faith affirms that the spiritual and immortal soul is created immediately by God and believe in all souls living and dead will be judged by Jesus Christ when he comes back to earth.

'The body is the man's earthly house or tabernacle, the habitation of both spirit and soul, so that while in it he is said to be "at home in the body." While in the body also he is said to be "clothed." [Job 10:11 to Job 2, or Job 5:4, 6.]] But he leaves the body at death.

"Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the

Know the man

soul" (psukee). [Matt. (10:28)]

The Lord says to the poor thief, dying by His side,

"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." [Luke (23:43)]

These words, addressed directly to the *man*, did not refer to his body; for that neither remained with the Lord, nor entered paradise with Him that day. [59,60,61]

Soul in Islam

Islam also considers the real self of a person is his soul (ruh) which has been created by Allah ﷻ and infused into man. The soul, as per the Islamic traditions, leaves the body on death and on the day of resurrection will be infused back into the same body which will be recreated by the will of Allah ﷻ. There are many evidences from Qur'an and hadith to point to this

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۖ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about the soul. Say, "The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little."

Ibn Maajah (4262) narrated from Abu Hurairah ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Angels come to the dying person and if the man was righteous, they say: 'Come out, O good soul that was in a good body, come out praiseworthy and receive the glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry.' And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven, and it is opened for it, and it is asked, 'Who is this?' They say: '[It is] So and so.' It is said: 'Welcome to the good soul that was in a good body. Enter praiseworthy and receive the glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a

Lord Who is not angry.’ And this is repeated until it is brought to the heaven above which is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. But if the man was evil, they say: ‘Come out O evil soul that was in an evil body. Come out blameworthy and receive the tidings of boiling water and dirty wound discharges, and other torments of similar kind, all together [38:58]. And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven and it is not opened for it. And it is said: ‘No welcome to the evil soul that was in an evil body. Go back blameworthy, for the gates of heaven will not be opened to you.’ So it is sent back down from heaven, then it goes to the grave.”

Since prehistoric times till now, most of the human race has believed in the existence of soul but the real meaning, work and its future is fervently mentioned depending upon the various schools of thought ranging from agnostics to atheists to polytheists to monotheists.

In addition to soul (ruh) we find many terms related to the quiddity of self in Islamic literature and at many places they are interchangeably used with soul. These are namely qalb (heart) and nafs (self). In coming chapters, we will try to research all these terms to reach at a final conclusion.[62]

Soul in Science

When the enigma of soul is presented to the scientists, one can find vexing answers to the query of the existence of soul. Some of these are an attempt to provide a rational answer and a few are nothing more than a publicity stunt. [63-68]

Thomas Alva Edison, an eminent person who gave the world concept of electric bulb was emphatically clear that the soul named entity did not exist and opined that there is no more reason to believe that any human brain will be immortal. According to him, it is like to think that one of his phonographic cylinders will be immortal and he drew the analogy that since we did not know what is the power to keep soul moving after death hence there is nothing like soul . Hence, he considered the soul being immortal as a mere speculation. He also raised an issue that that since we are unable to understand the souls so we call it immortal.

Duncan MacDougall decided to prove the existence of soul by studying the dying person and attempting to weigh the soul. He chose an extremely sick person suffering from tuberculosis who was so exhausted that he could not move and hence could be weighed on a scale perfectly. The patient was under observation for nearly four hours before death, lying on a bed arranged on a lightweight framework built upon very delicately balanced

platform beam scales. The patient's comfort was taken care of in every way, although he was practically moribund when placed upon the bed. He lost weight slowly at the speed of approximately one ounce per hour due to evaporation of moisture in respiration and sweat. When he expired and suddenly coincident with death the beam end dropped with an audible stroke hitting against the lower limiting bar and remaining there with no rebound. The loss was about three-fourths of an oz. Therefore, he speculated that the soul had weight and it is between 0.5 to 1.5 ounces as per his findings in six patients. He went further to take photograph of the soul and claimed that there was 'a light resembling that of the interstellar ether in or around skulls of the patients at the moments they died. Although he expressed concern that 'the soul substance might become [too] agitated' to be photographed at the instant of death. When his results were first published, the critics argued that the load loss might be explained by physiologic factors, like evaporation. Moreover, more so in many of his patients there was no loss of weight.

Max Baff of Clark University used x-ray cinematography to study the soul and postulated that even the activities of the so-called soul may be projected on the screen after taking photographs at the moment of death and immediately after. It is the belief that when the heart stops beating the soul leaves the body. Something may be learned of the soul by observing the changes in its habitat, i.e., brain, at the moment when life ceases. He did not believe in existence of soul but for the sake of argument said that the

people may believe that the soul is a separate thing, it must be borne in mind that its activities, thought and action, are confined within the limitations of the brain.

Otto Rank has summed the situation regards the soul well. He felt that belief in the soul grew out of the need to reassure ourselves of immortality, despite our knowledge of the immutable biological fact of death. He said, "The collision (between our need and the fact of death) created a spark in our individual and social consciousness that through history has become both consolation and inspiration: the immortal soul... The immortal soul, whether fact or fiction, gives comfort."

V. S. Ramachandran, brain scientist at the University of California, believes that the concept of soul as an immaterial spirit that occupies individual brains and is only evolved in humans is a complete nonsense. He believed that kind of soul as a superstition. The neurosciences made a great progress but the mystery of subjective experiences has not been elucidated, as it should be. The major problem with the current knowledge of science is that we cannot give an explanation that some form of consciousness persists after our bodies die and decay into their constituent atoms. There is no way we can explain that soul exists in our brains after death. This concept raises multiple questions, which quantum physics simply cannot answer, like the contents of soul, the forces acting on it and their interaction and so on.

"There's no reason to be agnostic about ideas that are dramatically incompatible with everything we know about modern science. Once we get over any reluctance to face reality on this issue, we can get down to the much more interesting questions of how human beings and

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consciousness really work.”

In mid 1990s, a pair of world-renowned quantum scientists claimed that they can prove the existence of the soul. Dr Stuart Hameroff and Sir Roger Penrose developed a quantum theory of consciousness asserting that our souls are contained inside structures called microtubules, which live, within our brain cells. Their idea stems from the notion of the brain as a biological computer which has 100 billion neurons and their axonal firings and synaptic connections acting as information networks. They postulated that experience of consciousness is the result of quantum gravity effects inside these microtubules - a process they called as orchestrated objective reduction. They gave an example of near-death experience wherein the microtubules lose their quantum state, but the information within them is not destroyed hence the soul does not die but returns to the universe.

Korotkov used a bioelectric imaging technique called Kirlian photography. It was found that images could be produced on photographic plates without light if they were subjected to potent electrical charges. The technique evolved into several different types but used mostly for taking pictures of coronal discharges. However, it has also been used rather extensively for trying to take photographs of the aura of living creatures. And he developed a very advanced version of this which he called ‘Electrophotonics,’ which he says can be used to capture images of human auras and measure fluctuations within them to detect biological imbalances or problems. The technique is also apparently useful for photographing the human soul leaving the body, which Korotkov believed could be done by photographing

the aura upon the moment of death. With this hypothesis, he did manage to get some popularity but could never prove anything substantial. Despite the popularity, his hypothesis could never stand the test of time.

One of the best answers given by the scientists who are people of faith, like Kenneth R. Miller is, “Asking about the science of the soul is pointless, in a way, because it is not a subject science can address. It is not physical and investigate able in the world of science, as a scientist, I have nothing to say about the soul. It’s not a scientific idea”.

From the above discussion, one can say with confidence that there is no evidence of soul in the world of science as of today. However, an important point is that the scientific theories and explanations are ever-changing so what may happen after few years cannot be said with certainty. There are so many scientific theories which have changed with time like concepts of motion of plenary bodies, laws of physical motion, structure of atom to name a few. In the field of medicine, we see the changes in the description of etio-pathogenesis of the diseases and their cure changing now and then. The next important issue to be understood is that all the laws of science apply to matter and in case of soul, the matter is not a constituent so all laws of science have to fail to explain its attributes and it is only metaphysics, which can unravel the mysteries of soul. So in the current journey of search of self, let me not venture as a scientist as science is too below the standard to grasp the intricacies of the soul!

Me at Crossroads

One of the important problems which one encounters here is which school of thought is correct and hence from this point onwards I will have to take one direction. Either the school of philosophers has to be followed or that of some religious authorities as they all believe in soul. Now the concept of faith comes into play and from this point in the book one of the concepts has to be accepted by me in order to move into the sublime portion of the concept. I chose the concept given by Islam for the reason it seems the most correct as compared to all of the concepts mentioned previously due to following reasons:

1) All the scientific discoveries and study in the man end at the level of matter and in the thought process science fails to move beyond the limbic system. I, as a student of medicine, am convinced by conviction that this cannot be the ultimate truth as human being is the most sophisticated creation in the universe. My assumption is that the working of universe is simpler than the working of human body. When one studies closely the subject on medical levels, philosophical levels and spiritual levels than anyone can understand my hypothesis.

2) The philosophers right from prehistoric times till now explained the reality of man and wrote treatises on the

subject with mesmerizing phrases and descriptions. But their interpretations have never influenced me because all their assumptions are based on logic and their understandings which have the inherent lacunae of being 'just human' and human brain has its limitations, after all how much can a kilogram of human brain matter grasp the reality of human existence?

3) All the religions have described the reality of man and here I had to make a choice which one to choose. Than amongst these my choice was Islam and it is not a blind faith but my decision is based on following arguments.

a) In some religions the belief in God is not there and one fails to understand the working of the magnificent system of universe without the any organizer. In some religions, the God is described with such attributes like having bestial appearance, having a spouse, friend, doing cheatings etc., which any intelligent person feels ashamed to even think of in his Creator. Some people hypothesize that the God is same as the inner self of man and I fail to accept the entity as my supreme which is just me, so this again did not conform to my understanding. The most appealing religious doctrine was that of the Islam as it testifies to the presence of God who is not me and has such beautiful attributes like, Oneness, (not having any partner, spouse, kid, parents), Creator, Sustainer, all Knowing, Nourisher, all Seeing, all Hearing, Omnipresent and so on. All of them are described by His chosen Prophets and again it makes sense that the God cannot talk to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

b) Islam upholds the sanctity of all the prophets including that of Judaism and Christianity

c) Islam considers all the books revealed to the prophets as

true and only differs from their current followers in the sanctity of the originality of the text which is available in current times.

d) Only book which has same text since more than fourteen centuries is Holy Qur'an because both written and oral versions of it have stood the test of time and are same anywhere in the world even today. This is the only book which is memorized by thousands of people since last centuries so much so that if all the copies are collected and destroyed today, one can generate the copies of the Qur'an in enough numbers which can again be sent to whole world. The amazing fact is that all the copies will be exactly the same without any difference of even the punctuations! So my choice of continuing my research will be the Holy Qur'an and I will take you through it in my study of self.

Knowledge of Self in Islam

One of the important characteristics of human being is that he is aware of himself and his surroundings so the knowledge of one's body parts, its needs, means of protecting it are all present in a man. A person knows himself far better than anything else. When he is hungry desire for food is there, one looks for water when he is thirsty, feels like fighting when offended so everyone has this much of knowledge of himself. This amount of knowledge is more or less shared by all the animals so this knowledge of oneself cannot be the key to understanding the essence of the human being.

The real self-knowledge consists in solving mysteries about one self, and these include, what is ones quiddity? Where from has one come? Where will he go? Why is he here? What is the meaning of the real success? What is the real failure? For all this knowledge is important. The acquisition of knowledge is one of the basic fundamentals in Islam and this can be emphasized by the fact that the first verse revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ was,

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

Read! In the Name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists) (96:1)

So one has to acquire knowledge and there are numerous

branches of knowledge and one of the elegant one deals with the knowledge of self because that help us in understanding our mission of life in this universe. We begin with a famous Arabic quote,

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

He who knows himself knows his Lord

In many texts it is mentioned as a hadith but in reality it is not a hadith but is a saying attributed to Yahya ibn Muadh ar-Razi . [Al-Maqasid al-Hassana]. The question of the knowledge of self has been addressed by many great scholars of the Muslim community and when we address this question we will look for it in the Holy Qur'an first and then in hadith and finally in the research work done by the various pioneers of this field.

The human being has a supreme status amongst the creation as the spirit was breathed into man by Allah ﷻ and this lead to a development in man of a special yearning, inclination to recognize Creator and subsequently love and worship Him. This is narrated in Holy Qur'an as ,

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration." [15:29]

This breathing of 'ruh' makes a man special in this world as he has an attribute which is shared by none in the Creation. This is responsible for him being called as the 'khalifa' (viceroys) of Allah ﷻ which has to be understood by man in order to attain the lofty status given to him by Allah ﷻ in eight verses of Qur'an

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels..... (2:30)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ

*And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth
..... (6:165)*

وَإِذْ كُنُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ

And remember when He made you successors after the people of Noah and increased you in stature extensively. So remember the favors of Allah that you might succeed. (7:69)

وَإِذْ كُنُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

And remember when He made you successors after the 'Aad and settled you in the land..... (7:74)

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ

Then We made you successors in the land after them so that We may observe how you will do. (10:14)

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ خَلَائِفَ وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا

And they denied him, so We saved him and those with him in the ship and made them successors, and We drowned those who denied Our signs. Then see how was the end of those who were warned. (10:73)

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ

Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah ? Little do you remember. (27:62)

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ مَنَافِئَ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ

It is He who has made you successors upon the earth. And whoever disbelieves – upon him will be [the consequence of] his disbelief... (35:39)

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ

[We said], “O David, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah.” (38:26)

These verses tell us that a vicegerent was appointed to keep order on the earth and to promulgate the divine laws. From here we learn the basic principles for the governance of men on the earth. The ultimate sovereignty in the universe belongs to Allah ﷻ Himself, as is explicitly stated in many verses of the Holy Qur'an .

“Judgment belongs to Allah alone” (6:57)

“The sovereignty of the skies and the earth belongs to Him alone” (9:116)

But He has, in His wisdom, chosen to send His vicegerents to the earth for maintaining spiritual and temporal order. Their function is to announce and promulgate divine commandments, to teach men how to abide by these laws, and sometimes even to exercise temporal power as well as spiritual authority under divine guidance. The appointment is made directly by Allah ﷻ Himself, and is in no sense a reward for the good deeds or the spiritual effort of the individual concerned. There is a total consensus of all the authentic scholars of the Islamic Ummah on the doctrine that prophet hood is not a thing which one can attain through

one's personal effort or on the merit of one's good deeds, but that Allah ﷻ Himself, in His supreme knowledge and wisdom, chooses certain individuals for acting as His messengers, prophets and vicegerents. The Holy Qur'an has explicitly declared it in several verses:

"Allah chooses His messengers from among the angels and from among men; surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing" (22:75)

"Allah knows best whom to entrust with His message (16:124).

These messengers receive divine commandments directly from Allah ﷻ and then teach the mankind. The chain of vicegerents began with Prophet Adam ﷺ and continued in the same way up to the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The chain of such vicegerents ends with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and for he is the last Messenger and Prophet ﷺ. Now the function of vicegerent is performed by the deputies of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Such a deputy (Khalifah) is to be chosen by the ummah or Islamic community and he is after all, a human being.

After understanding the fundamental importance of oneself a human being has to ponder on the essence or quiddity of himself. While we address the question of self in Islam we will have to elucidate various terms like, 'Nafs' (self) 'Ruh'(soul) and 'Qalb' (heart), 'Aql' (intellect) which have been used to describe quiddity of human being. At many places these terms have been used interchangeably and yet many people have used these in discrete context, only so subsequent chapters will be describing these one by one.

In literature, numerous works have been done on this

subject some of which, although done by Muslims, do not conform to the universally accepted teachings of shariah hence I have tried to put the teachings of only those scholars whose teachings have been unanimously accepted by the Muslim scholars.

Nafs or Self

The word النَّفْسُ nafs has many meanings like soul, the psyche, the ego, self, life, person, heart or mind. It occurs in the Holy Qur'an 305 times in more than forty chapters with different connotations:

1) Nafs meaning 'human being.'

مَنْ أَجَلَ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

*For this reason we prescribed to the children of Israel that
whoever kills a person (nafs), be it
for manslaughter or mischief in the land, it is as though he
has killed all men. (5:32)*

2) Nafs meaning the 'original creation.'

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ
مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

*O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul
and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them
many men and women. (4: 1)*

3) Nafs meaning the 'influential inner force of man (the lower desires).'

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and

prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination (79:40)

4) Nafs meaning ‘ruh’ (spirit)

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ

وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى

"Allah takes men's souls (anfus) at the time of their death, and those that die not, during their sleep." (39:42)

Nafs has commonly been associated with ruh and is often ‘used synonymously with ruh’ as said by *Hafiz ibn Qaym* رحمته الله who also stated, “The Nafs is a single entity, although its state may change: from the Nafs-e-Ammara, to the Nafs al-Lawwama, to the Nafs-e-Mutmainna, which is the final aim of perfection....”

Sayid Hawwa رحمته الله is of the opinion that the Nafs exists in multidimensional forms. When the Nafs is tranquil because of obeying Allah, and the soul opposes its desires, this soul is known as Nafs-e-Mutmainna. Regarding this, Allah has spoken about it in the Qur'an (89:27-28). However if the soul is not at peace with itself and is exposed to desires, then such soul is known as the Nafs-e-Lawwama because this soul reproaches its owner due to the owner's carelessness in fulfilling out Allah's wishes [Qur'an (75:2)]. The third variety is the soul that submits to lusts and allows itself to be seduced by Shaytan, such a soul is known as Nafs-e-Ammara Bissu. Allah tells the story about the wife of al-Aziz (Zulaikha) in Qur'an (12:53). [69,70,71]

The Nafs-e-Ammara has an alliance with Shaytan who always pushes it to all kinds of sins and makes it to imbibe falsehood by presenting it in fascinating manner. [72] While as the Nafs al-Lawwama is the one which cannot rest in any

one state. It has a combination of many good and bad qualities and fluctuates between them. It is the Nafs of the believer and it reprimands the person for any wrong doings. [69,70]The third variety is the Nafs-e-Mutmainna about whom Imam Baghawi رحمہ اللہ says that an angel is there who helps him to maintain this stature by instilling good into the Nafs so that it desires what is good and is aware of the excellence of good actions. The angel also keeps the self away from wrong action and shows it the ugliness of bad deeds. This soul is always engaged in the actions which are liked by Allah ﷻ.

Although, many a times it has been used differently. Some people are of the opinion that the self ‘represents the incorruptible, transcendental human essence and the nafs is the changing aspect of man, capable of rebellion against God, hence should be trained and disciplined so as to achieve salvation. Nafs basically represents the internal force in man which has an influence upon his thinking, his behavior and his relationships with others. It refers to *totality of desires inside man*. The mystics associate the nafs with the lowest principle of man.

Nafs has been graded variously and in Qur’an it has been divided into three grades depending on their qualities and the man goes through the three stages of development if he strives in this path. The following discussion is based on tafseer as in Mariful Qur’an with some description of the attributes of each as mentioned by Sheikh Al Shabrawi رحمہ اللہ in his famous book ‘the degrees of the soul’. [74]

Inciting Self (Nafs Amarah)

This is the lowest stage of the self which always

commands one to do evil. The reference to this is made in the surah Yousuf of Holy Qur'an, when Zulikha invited Prophet Yousuf عليه السلام for the sin. He despite saving himself from the sin, mentioned about his self as (due to his great piety)

وَمَا أَبْرِئُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent joiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy.

Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful. (12:53)

This is as it appears in a Hadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have asked the Sahabah (companions), "What do you think about a companion who, if you treat him nicely, feed him, clothe him, and still he would throw you in all sorts of troubles and if you insult him, and keep him hungry and naked, he would do what is good for you?" The Sahabah said, "O messenger of Allah ﷺ, there just cannot be a companion worse than him in this whole world!" He said, "By Him in whose hands rests my life, yourself inside you is such a companion." (Qurtubi). And it appears in another Hadith, "Your greatest enemy is your own self which not only disgraces you by getting you involved in evil deeds, but also makes you run into all sorts of troubles." However, the cited verse and Hadith narrations given above tell us that human self does usually demand from us the doing of what is bad for us.

One tradition holds that Holy Prophet ﷺ said after returning from a war, "We now return from the small struggle (Jihad-i-Asghar) to the big struggle (Jihad-i-Akbar)". His companions asked, "O Prophet of Allah, what is the big struggle?" He replied, "The struggle against nafs."

Sheikh Al Shabrawi رحمته الله has described its *attributes* as ignorance, greed, arrogance, lust, resentment, envy, bad character, mockery, harming others with his speech or hands. One who seeks to *treat* this nafs of its maladies had been advised to do following:

- *Remain within the bounds of sharia* and especially save yourself from haram food. The foremost job of the seeker is to cling to the sharia rulings as this is the first step to his emancipation in the eyes of his Lord.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا، فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ، كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لأَعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لأُعِيذَنَّهُ، وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ عَنْ شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ تَرَدَّدِي عَنْ نَفْسِ عَبْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِ، يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَنَا أَكْرَهُ مَسَاءَتَهُ"

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ said: Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not

hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of My faithful servant: he hates death and I hate hurting him. (Bukhari)

- *Take yourself to account frequently.* One must have the habit of calling oneself to account daily for some time (muhasaba) so that one can repent for the wrong doings and improve his good deeds. It has been the practice of all the great people to do so.

Umar ibn Al-Khattaab ؓ said, “*Call yourselves to account before you are called to account, and weigh yourselves before you are weighed, as calling yourselves to account today will make it easier for you when you are called to account tomorrow, and be adorned for the great appearance that Day shall you be brought to Judgment, and not a secret of you will be hidden.*” (Ahmad)

- *Instill fear in your soul by reminding it of death.*

أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ

Abu Huraira ؓ reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “*Remember often the destroyer of pleasures,*” by which he meant death. (Tirmizi 2307)

- *Remember your Lord as much as possible.* Abu Huraira ؓ reported that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said that Allah ﷻ said,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حِينَ يَذْكُرُنِي إِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ هُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي شَبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ

إِنِّي ذَرَأًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بِأَعَّا وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرَوَلَةً

“I am near to the thought of My servant as he thinks about Me, and I am with him as he remembers Me. And if he remembers Me in his heart, I also remember him in My heart, and if he remembers Me in assembly I remember him in assembly, better than his (remembrance), and if he draws near Me by the span of a palm, I draw near him by the cubit, and if he draws near me by the cubit I draw near him by the space (covered by) two hands. And if he walks towards Me, I rush towards him.” (Sahih Muslim)

Another hadith mentions, “Remember Allah ﷻ so much that people call you mad.” (Ibn Hibban)

Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Refresh your Iman.” The companions said, “How can we refresh our Iman O' Messenger of Allah ﷺ?” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Repeat the Kalimah La ilaha illallah ﷻ very frequently and abundantly.”

•Be abundant in your pleas and one should not say that Allah ﷻ does not accept from my pleas. Allah ﷻ says in Holy Qur'an.

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ

دُخْرِينَ

And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."

Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.” (40:60,61)

Al-Nuaman ibn Bashir ؓ reported: The Prophet ﷺ said,

عَنْ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ

“Supplication is the essence of worship.” (Tirmidhi 3247)

The prayer is just like marrow as it induces humility and submissiveness to the Lord and makes a person feel the power of Lord and recognize that there is nobody who can fulfil ones needs other than Allah ﷻ. As long as one is confined within the vices of this station one cannot progress further. So one must look for the attributes mentioned above and try to get rid of them using the advice given by the sheikh (spiritual guide).

•*Do not waste your time* and spend all your efforts in achieving His closeness. One must understand that time is one of the greatest bounties of Allah ﷻ and in real sense time is life. The measurement of life is in years and that is time. Hence if we waste time we are actually wasting life. This is also illustrated in the hadith

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُورٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنهما reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "There are two blessings which many people waste: health and free time." (Bukhari 6049)

Reproaching Self (Nafs-e- Lawwamah)

This is the second stage of the development of self. In Surah Al-Qiyamah, this very human self has been given the honour of being called by the اللّٰوَمَةِ ‘lawwamah’ (reproaching) placing it at a level that the Lord of All Honour has sworn by it:

وَلَا أَقْسَمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

I do swear by the day of Judgement and I do swear by the reproaching self (75:1,2).

The word اللّوامة lawwamah is derived from 'Lawm' signifying 'reproach or upbraid'. This nafs upbraids or inculcates a feeling for doing good deeds and causes a bad feeling for any bad deeds committed. So this faculty keeps a person all the time engaged in the quest for reaching higher stature by reproaching and criticizing him for bad deeds and hence inculcating the faculty of repentance in him so that one abstains from sins in future. This makes one try to reach for higher goals in life by doing better deeds.

On the same basis, Hasan al-Basri رحمته الله interpreted 'nafs lawwamah' as 'nafs muminah' meaning, the 'believing soul' and said, *"By Allah سبحانه! A believer at all times upbraids his own self. It is obvious why he should reproach himself when he commits evil. He reproaches himself when he does good deeds as well, because he feels that he has not performed his duties of servitude and Divine worship adequately. He feels that he has not fulfilled and consummated his obligations of slave-hood perfectly. Therefore, he reproaches himself for his shortcomings in the performance of his duties and obligations."* Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه and Hasan al-Basri رحمته الله and others have expressed the view that Allah سبحانه has sworn an oath by the self-reproaching conscience in order to show honour for the believing souls who take account of their deeds, regret, and feel sorry for their shortcomings and reproach themselves.

The first stage is developed into the second stage when the traveler performs righteousness, and exerts himself in *riyadah* 'ascetic discipline' and *mujahadah* 'spiritual struggle'. This nafs knows its own imperfections and regrets its evils and shortcomings, but it is not strong enough to stop

committing all sins.

Sheikh al Shabrawi ﷺ described its *attributes* and its ways to improvement in a beautiful manner. In this stage the person accepts truth as truth and falsehood as falsehood, he adheres to principles of shariah, does good deeds but these are having contamination of *riya* i.e., although his deeds are for the sake of Allah ﷻ yet he loves that people find out about his actions and he be praised for them. So one has hidden idols in himself which is condemnable. It is the second station in the journey of the righteous (*muqarabeen*) and for this group their Lord has told them to die before death i.e., 'kill their lowly attributes of self for the sake of Allah ﷻ. So they strive for the death of the self. For the righteous (*abrar*) this is the ultimate bode but for *muqarabeen* this is just a though fare for higher success. The most important attribute in this station which is needed for moving higher is the sincerity (*ikhlaas*) and achieving this to such an extent that one contemplates that the real force behind all the actions is that of Allah ﷻ. The *muqarabeen* do not see their prayers as their great deeds but perceive them as the pathway opened by Allah ﷻ to them for approaching their destination. They attribute all their good actions to the act of Lord and hence they have no need of sincerity as the idea of being ostentatious does not come to their minds. The righteous people are acceptable to Allah ﷻ as they have piety (*taqwa*) but are unable to Get rid of all the blemishes. Meanwhile ones brought near are so much busy with the contemplation of Allah ﷻ that they are protected from most of the harms.

To cross this station following of all the shariah principles is the foremost and in addition one must focus on following:

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- Eat and sleep to such an extent which is necessary for the body (the criteria is different for different people depending on their condition of health)
 - Talk less. Avoid excessive talking, joking and laughing. These activities reduce the enlightenment of heart.
 - Meet people only when necessary (necessary means that one will have worldly or religious loss if he does not meet). If one seeks Lord, he must avoid creation and concentrate on Creator.
 - Constant remembrance of Allah ﷻ. In this, a spiritual guide will be of immense help to guide how to do it but in any case remembering Allah ﷻ by any of his names will be fruitful
 - Contemplation is important in this stage
- Moderation is needed in all of these activities and any deviation for the moderate path is likely to be catastrophic. In this the supervision of someone who is well versed with the subject is of immense importance.

Self at peace (Nafs-e-Mutmainna)

In Surah Al-Fajr, by calling this very human self – Mutmainna (at peace), glad tidings of Jannah have been given:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

O, self, at peace, come back to your Lord ... (89:27,28)

The third and highest stage of development is called An-nafs-ul-Mutmainna 'the self at peace'. This self develops into this stage when it progressively performs righteousness and attains Divine nearness and applies the sacred laws of Shariah so rigorously that Shariah becomes his nature and develops a natural hatred for anything contrary to Shariah.

The title of the self at this stage is Mutmainna. When someone keeps striving hard against his or her self, and brings it to a state where the very urge to turn to evil deeds does not remain there anymore, then, that self becomes what is called: Mutmainna (the self at peace). Righteous people can arrive at this state through spiritual strivings. Still, there is no certainty that this state will continue forever. But, the prophets of Allah ﷺ, may peace be upon them all, are Divinely blessed with such self at peace without any previous striving and it always remains constant at that state.

The *attributes* mentioned in this stage are, knowledge, piety, forgiving people for their faults, rectitude, yearning, shunning creation and concentrating on Creator, absence of fear and hope, love of remembrance, joy with Allah ﷻ, uttering words of wisdom and knowledge and having contemplation. The person is not distracted from his inclination to Allah ﷻ by his wealth, children or anything, he has no fear of anything other than his Lord. In this stage the seeker has such an ‘iman’ (belief) that is free from any doubts and he now has entered the phase where he has encountered ‘tajjaliyat’ (theophany).

Even in this stage one cannot be totally safe if one is not vigilant and there is always a danger of falling down to lower levels. The seeker here is in danger as he may get mistaken that now he has tasted theophany and so many veils have been removed due to his devotion. This has decreased his fear which used to hold him back from sins. So he feels he has liberty to do whatever he wishes. So the most effective treatment for this situation is to adhere strictly to sharia and force oneself to do all the devotional acts as he had been

doing before. One must be emphatically clear that ‘riza’ (satisfaction with a person) of Allah ﷻ and his theophany are only for the obedient ones whereas his wrath and remoteness is for the one who commit sins. Satan is always after person and he has brought many saints down from this level to lowest possible state of soul. It has been narrated in the biographies of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani that once he saw a dazzling light which filled the whole sky. Then a human image appeared in it and told him he was his lord and that he had made everything that was prohibited in Islam lawful for him. Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ recognized him as the devil and told him to get lost. Then the sky turned dark and the human frame fizzled out into smoke. Following this, Shaikh heard someone say to him that he had misled seventy people in this way but that his knowledge and piety had saved him. To this the Shaikh responded that it was through the Grace of Allah ﷻ that he had been saved! The treachery of Shaytan could obviously never make Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ abandon the shariah (sacred Muslim law).

Once someone asked Junaid Baghdadi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ that why he still holds a rosary in his hands when he had reached the stature which everybody knows. His reply was astonishing, “I will not abandon what has brought me to the object of my quest.”

Hence one must stand at the door of his Lord humbly and ask Him and Him only for his blessings and guidance, Allah ﷻ will never let the seeker down.

The Holy Qur’an mentions only three stages of the development as

described above but many mystics (Sufis) have added a few more stages which are as follows:

Serene Self (Nafs-e-Radiyyah)

This stage comes after the third principal stage. On this level one is pleased with whatever comes from Allah ﷻ and one doesn't live in the past or future, but in the moment. Its attributes are forbearance, gratitude, contentment with destiny, not deviating from sharia principles, love for invocations, desire to help others financially. One finds the greatest pleasure in following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The love for Holy Prophet ﷺ is different than the one in previous stations. One's heart is always contemplating the majesty and beauty of Allah ﷻ. In this one has reached the state of tamkin (stability in state of heart) and his faith is of certainty (ain al yaqeen). The person here does not speak even a single word contrary to shariah, people love to listen to him and people find delight in looking at him. A person at this stage must give some time to people so that they get benefitted by his teachings as most of them are intuitional and have a profound effect on the hearts of people. One must devote most of his time to his Lord and this will pave his path to final stages of perfection as this stage is the first stage of perfection. In this stage one may experience the desire for being Shaikh (spiritual guide) and the desire may be to guide the people to Allah ﷻ. But one word of caution is that it may be the trick of self so if one becomes a guide without any effort or desire on the part of himself than it is the will of Allah ﷻ and He will protect the seeker and he can continue the work. If this is one's state than he must thank Allah ﷻ and

be humble to seekers and guide them will love and sympathy and always consider them better than himself and always be indebted to them. If one cannot have these qualities, then he must not stay on this position. Some souls are naturally soft, gentle, noble and intelligent so they are fit to be guides in this fourth station and they can do this service for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Many souls despite going into this stage are not fit to be guides so they must complete their self-training into higher stages and then can qualify for being a guide.

Contended Self

The principal attribute at this station is ‘fana’(extinction) i.e., elimination of human attributes followed by ‘baqa’(subsistence) which is the state of faith called as ‘Haqul yaqeen” i.e., truth of certainty. Although many scholars are of the view that complete elimination of human attributes is not possible and in ‘fana’ human attributes are subdued and overwhelmed by divine attributes.

Regarding the level of faith i.e., amount of belief the scholars have mentioned three levels :

- *Ilm ul Yaqeen* - ‘Knowledge of Certainty’

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

No! If you only knew with knowledge of certainty... (102:5)

- *Ayn ul Yaqeen* - ‘Eye of Certainty’

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty. (102:7)

- *Haqq ul Yaqeen* - ‘Truth / Reality of Certainty’

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

Indeed, this is the true certainty, (56:95)

The root word for Yaqeen يقين is Yaqana - يقن meaning 'to be certain', 'to have certainty', 'to have firm conviction', 'to be convinced - sure'.

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِيْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَلَكُوْتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلِيَكُوْنُ مِنَ الْمُؤَقِّدِيْنَ

And thus did We show Ibrahim the Malakoot (Angelic Realm / Governing Forces) of the Heavens and the Earth, and so by this he would be of the Muqineen (those who have yaqeen - certainty / firm conviction)". (6:75)

The basic level of 'ilm ul yaqeen' is necessary for a believer and this is achieved by reading Qur'an and hadith and on the basis of this we are believers i.e., we believe in the Allah ﷻ and all what Holy Prophet ﷺ told us. Then as the believer strives to improve his deeds and abstains from sins the amount of faith steadily changes in quality and it reaches a state as if one is seeing the reality and with further improvement he feels reality. This sounds a bit confusing. An example has been given to describe these states. One reads that there is a particular lake in a city, this knowledge is 'ilm ul yaqeen'. When one goes to its shore and sees it, the belief that the lake exists becomes 'ain ul yaqeen' and once one jumps into the lake and feels it, the faith in the existence of lake is the best, it is 'haq ul yaqeen.'

In addition to 'haq ul yaqeen', the seeker here has achieved a state of being contented with whatever comes from Lord without an iota of objection to anything at all. One is absorbed in the contemplation of Allah ﷻ and by spending time in guiding people no harm comes to him. His prayers are always accepted but out of modesty he never utters a word unless forced to do so. The person is respected by all people and everyone wishes to stay in his company.

Pleasing Self

In this sixth station the main *attributes* are keeping the consideration of Allah ﷻ above anything else. The person is extremely sensitive in keeping promises and allocating everything at its place, being gentle with other human beings, guiding them to truth with love and affection till they are successful. The main attribute in this station is uniting creation with creator. The person in this station becomes the one about whom Allah ﷻ says *“My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it.”* (Bukhari)

This is the stage of ‘wilayat -e- kubra’ (greater vicegerency) but one must not get confused that Allah ﷻ permeate into anything, He is far above our imaginations and such ideas are heresy and apostasy. May Allah ﷻ save us from that misfortune.

Perfect Self (Nafs-e- Kamila)

It is the seventh station and the seeker here has no desire other than the pleasure of the Lord. He is the perfect saint and when people see him they are reminded of the Lord. His every moment is worship either by his body or soul. He seeks forgiveness in abundance and finds delight in people turning towards their Lord and is sad and angry on seeing people

turning away from their Lord. He does not have hatred for anybody in his heart. His fear and love is only for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

On this level one is dressed in the *attributes* of the Insan Kamil, ‘the perfect man’, who has completely surrendered and is inspired by Allah ﷻ. [73,74]

Concept of Soul in Islam

Like other people of the book, Islam considers the real self of a person is his soul (ruh) which has been created by Allah ﷻ and is immortal. In literature numerous works have been done on this subject some of which although done by Muslims do not conform to the accepted teachings of shariah. Hence I have put the teachings of only those scholars whose teachings have been unanimously accepted by the Muslim scholars. In Islamic literature in the initial period of Islam we do not find exhaustive reviews on the subject but in latter period many scholars like Imam Ghazalli, Ibn Arabi, Shah Waliullah رحمه الله wrote beautiful treatises on the subject with mind baffling eloquence which have mesmerized the research scholars and common masses alike.

The most direct reference to this is made in the verse of Sura Isra,

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“And they ask you about the soul. Say, the ‘Ruh’ is from the command of my Lord. And mankind has not been given of knowledge except a little”

The verse appearing above carries a question posed by disbelievers about ‘Ruh’ (soul, spirit) along with its answer that came from Allah ﷻ. The word ‘Ruh’ is used in the Arabic language and in the Holy Qur’an as well, to convey

several meanings. The well-recognized meaning taken from this word is the ‘soul’ on which depends life. In the Holy Qur’an, this word has also been used for:

- Angel Jibrael ﷺ

تَزَلُّ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ

The Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down (6:193,194).

- Sayyidna Isa ﷺ

الْقَهَّاءُ إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ

He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. [4:171]

- Wahy (revelation)

رَفِيعَ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ

الْتَّلَاقِ

[He is] the Exalted above [all] degrees, Owner of the Throne; He places the inspiration of His command upon whom He wills of His servants to warn of the Day of Meeting. - 40:15)

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِن

جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path (42: 52).

What does “Ruh” signify?

Therefore, the first thing to be determined here is the

intent of the questioners as to which meaning they had in mind when they had asked the question about the ‘Ruh’.

The background of the revelation of this verse given in authentic ahadith is just very clear in respect of the nature of the question. Those asking the question had asked about the living ‘Ruh’ and the underlying purpose was to find out the reality of ‘Ruh’. What is it? How does it come in and go out of the human body? How does it make a man and an animal come alive? According to the ahadith in Bukhari and Muslim, Abdullah ibn Masood رضي الله عنه narrates:

“Once I was walking with the Holy Prophet ﷺ through an unpopulated part of Madinah. He had a stick from the branch of a date palm in his blessed hand. When he passed by some Jews, they were talking among themselves: Muhammad is coming. Ask him about the ‘Ruh’. Others asked them not to do that. But, those bent on asking went ahead and asked the question. After having heard the question, the Holy Prophet ﷺ reclined on his stick and stood silent which gave me the inkling that the revelation was about to come on him. After a little while, when the revelation had come to him, he recited the , verse:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ

“And they ask you about the ‘Ruh’”

The majority of commentators - Ibn Kathir, Ibn Jarir, al-Qurtubi, Abu Hayyan, Alusi رحمهم الله confirm the view that the question related to the reality of the living ‘Ruh’. Previous verses have mentioned hostile

questions asked by the disbelievers and Mushriks (polytheists). Their objective thereby was to test the Holy Prophet ﷺ concerning his claim to be a messenger of Allah ﷻ. In answer to the question asked, the Holy Qur'an said:

قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

(Say, the 'Ruh' is from the command of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little").

From the view point of creation there are two categories of creation namely 'Alam Amr' and 'Alam Khalq'.

In 'Alam Amr', Allah ﷻ creates just by ordering "Let it happen" and does not use any preexisting substances and the concepts of physics like mass, weight, measure, divisibility etc. do not apply to these entities. The soul belongs to this group of creation.

In 'Alam Khalq', the laws of physics do apply and human body belongs to this group of creation.

The soul is immortal and it is the seat of knowing the 'reality'. One who works hard on understanding the principles of the subject will definitely reach to a logical conclusion.

While explaining the answer, statements and interpretations given by commentators differ. The closest and the clearest of these is what Qazi Thanullah Panipati رحمه الله has preferred in his Tafsir Mazhari. He said that only what was necessary and what common people would understand has been told - and the full reality of 'Ruh', that the question sought, was not unfolded because it was beyond the comprehension of common people and, for that matter,

nothing they needed hinged on understanding it. Here, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to respond by saying that the ‘Ruh’ is from the command of my Lord. In other words, it is not like the usual created that come into existence through the dispersal of matter and procreation. In fact, it is something created directly through the command (kun: ‘be’) of Allah ﷻ. At least, this much of the answer makes it clear that ‘Ruh’ cannot be taken on the analogy of common matter - which removes all those doubts that emerge as a result of trying to understand ‘Ruh’ through the prism of materialistic inquiry. The hard truth is that this much knowledge of ‘Ruh’ is sufficient for a man. No business, religious or worldly, depends on knowing more than that. Therefore, taking that part of the question as redundant and unnecessary, it was not answered - especially when understanding its reality is something not easy even for the wisest of the wise, not to say much about the common people. [Ma’ariful-Qur’an]

Is it possible for anyone to have the knowledge of the reality of ‘Ruh’?

The Holy Qur’an has given an answer to this question in accordance with the need and comprehension of the addressee. It has not elected to unfold the reality of ‘Ruh’. But, it does not necessarily imply that no human being can simply understand the reality of ‘Ruh’ and that the Holy Prophet ﷺ also did not know its reality. The truth of the matter is that this verse neither negates nor confirms it. If the Prophet ﷺ were to come to know its reality through ‘Wahy’ (revelation), or a ‘Waliyy’ (man/friend of Allah ﷻ) through ‘Kashf’ (illumination) and ‘Ilham’ (inspiration),

then, it is not contrary to this verse. In fact, even if this matter is debated and investigated in terms of reason and philosophy, it would certainly be called useless and unnecessary, but it cannot be called impermissible. Therefore, many learned scholars from the early and later period of Islam have written standard books about Ruh.

At this juncture, Imam al-Baghawi has carried a detailed report from Abdullah Ibn Abbas ؓ that this verse was revealed in Makkah al-Mukarramah. It happened at a time when the Quraysh chiefs of Makkah got together and talked about the problem that Muhammad was born amongst us and grew up into a young man. No one ever doubted his trustworthiness, honesty and truthfulness, and he was never accused by anyone of having told a lie. Yet, despite all that, we just do not understand the claim of being a Prophet ﷺ he was now making. Therefore, let us do something about it, like sending our delegation to the Jewish scholars of Madinah and get a learned opinion about him from them. So, a delegation from the Quraysh met the Jewish scholars in Madinah. They advised, We tell you three things. Ask him about these three. If he answers all the three, he is not a Prophet ﷺ. Similarly, if he does not answer any of the three, he is still not a Prophet ﷺ. And if he answers two, not answering the third, be certain that he is the Prophet ﷺ.” They proposed three questions: (1) Ask him about those in the past who had sought refuge in a cave to stay safe from shirk - because, their account is unique. (2) Ask him about the person who had traveled through the East and West of the Earth and what had happened to him. (3) Ask him about the ‘Ruh’ (soul, spirit).

The delegation returned and posed those three questions before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He said, “I shall give you the answer to this tomorrow” but, he did not say, ‘Insha’ Allah ﷻ’ with it. The outcome was that the channel of Wahy (revelation) remained discontinued for a few days. There are various reports that put the number of days from twelve, fifteen to forty during which it stood stopped. The Quraysh of Makkah had their opportunity to hurl taunts – “We were promised an answer tomorrow, now so many days have passed and we have no answer!” This caused the Holy Prophet ﷺ to become anxious. Then came angel Jibrail عليه السلام with the verse:

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

“And never say about anything: "I will do that tomorrow," without [saying]: "Insha' Allah [If Allah wills].” [18: 23,24)

and, after that, he recited the verse about the Ruh mentioned above.

Another verse of the holy Qur’an further explains the nature of human essence (soul) as:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْنَاهُ وَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.

Blowing of Spirit into the Human Body and Making Angels bow to him

Is the spirit (Ruh) a physical entity, or pure essence? On this subject, there has been a difference of opinion among the learned since a long time. According to Shaykh Abd Al-Rauf

Al-Munawi رحمه الله, there are up to a thousand positions taken by them. But, they are all based on conjectures. None of them can be called certain. Imam Al-Ghazali, Imam Razi and mystic scholars and thinkers maintain that it is no physical entity. It is pure essence. Imam Razi has advanced twelve arguments in support of this view. But, the majority of the 'Ulama' of the Muslim Ummah declare 'Ruh' (spirit, soul) to be a highly refined physical entity. The word: (nafkh) means to blow, to breathe into. If we were to go by the consensus of the majority of Ulama and take 'Ruh' to be a refined physical entity, then breathing into it becomes evident by itself. And if we were to accept it to be pure essence, then breathing into it would mean establishing its connection to the body.

Qadi Thanauallah in his famous commentary (Tafsir Mazhari) says that 'Ruh' has two kinds: (1) Higher (Ulwi) and (2) Lower (Sufli).

The higher 'Ruh' is bereft of matter and is a creation of Allah ﷻ, the comprehension of whose reality is difficult. The masters of insight by illumination (Ahle-kashf) see its real station to be above the Throne (Arsh) because it is more refined than the Arsh. And this higher 'Ruh', as seen through illumination, is sensed in five degrees at upper and lower levels. Their number is five and they are: (1) The heart (Qalb) (2) The spirit (Ruh) (3) The mystery (Sirr) (4) The secret (Khafii) (5) The most secret (Akhfii). These are all from the refinements of the domain of Divine command towards which the Holy Qur'an has hinted by declaring:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

*And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of
My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.*

(15:29).

The lower 'Ruh' is a refined vapour which emerges from the combination of the four elements of the human body, that is, from fire, water, dust and air, and this lower 'Ruh' is called the self (nafs). Allah ﷻ has made this lower spirit called 'self' a mirror of the higher spirits mentioned above. An illustration would make it clear. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is far away, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. It even receives the heat of the sun in it which could burn a piece of cloth. The same thing applies to the higher spirits. Though they are, because of their purity and detachment, very high and elevated in station, and far distant too, yet their reflection appears in the mirror of the lower spirit and transfers the states and effects of the higher spirits into it. When these very effects take root in human selves, they become known as subordinate parts of each individual's spirit.

Then, this lower form of spirit which is identified as *Nafs or Self*, armed with the states and effects which it has acquired from the higher forms of spirits first gets connected with the heart muscle of the human body. This connection itself is another name for life. Once the lower spirit relates to the human heart, it infuses in it life and cognitions which it has acquired from the higher spirits. This lower spirit then starts circulating through the thin vessels spread throughout the body and thus reaches every part of it. It is this infusion of the lower spirit into the human body which has been called the 'blowing or breathing of the spirit' (the nafakh of 'Ruh') because it bears close resemblance to blowing or breathing

into something. And, in the present verse, Allah ﷻ has attributed the spirit to Himself. He has said ‘from My spirit’ so that the superior status of the human spirit out of the entire creation becomes evident - because it has come into existence without any material substance and only under Divine command. In addition to that, it has a unique ability to accept and absorb the manifestations of Divine light, an ability which does not exist in the spirit of any other living creature other than that of the human person. Though dust is the dominant element in the creation of man – and that is why the creation of man has been attributed to clay - but the reality is that man is a combination of ten elements out of which five belong to the universe of creation (alam khalq) while the other five to the universe of Divine command (alam amr). The four elements of the universe of creation are fire, water, dust and air. The fifth is the refined vapour from these four which is called the lower spirit or nafs. As for the five elements of the universe of Divine command mentioned above, they are: (1) heart (qalb) (2) spirit (ruh) (3) mystery (sirr) (4) secret (khafii) (5) totally hidden (akhfa).

The spirit was breathed into man by Allah ﷻ and this lead to the development in man of a special yearning, inclination to recognize the Creator and subsequently love and worship Him. This is narrated in holy Qur’an as

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْنَاهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

*And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of
My [created] soul, then fall down to him in
prostration." [15:29]*

This makes a man special in this world as he has an

attribute which is shared by none in the Creation. This effect was responsible for man being called as the ‘khalifa’ of Allah ﷻ which has to be understood by man in order to attain the lofty status given to him by Allah ﷻ.

It is by virtue of the spirit from God breathed into man which enables him to enjoy a greater affinity to God than the rest of Creation. This is what is meant by man being made in the ‘image of God’, and this is why man is able to imbibe in himself the attributes of God in a limited sense. It is the man's responsibility to realize his essential spiritual nature, for in this realization lies the knowledge of God. Ibn Qayim رحمه الله explains that one has to understand an important grammatical issue to avoid any misconception. Whenever a noun is attached to the name of Allah and the noun is denoting a distinctive identity then the meaning is suggestive of ownership like ‘Naqatallah’, meaning the she-camel of Allah. When the associated noun does not imply any discrete thing or person then it implies the quality or the attribute of Allah, like ‘Rahmatullah’- Mercy of Allah. The Ruh belongs to the former category and not the latter .

It is because of this comprehensive making of the human model that man became deserving of Divine vice-regency, and very much capable of absorbing the light which helps him know his Lord and, of course, sustaining his own burning quest on the path of love and longing for Him. The outcome, though unspecified as to its actual state, is developing intimate relationship with the Divine because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

أَنْتَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَبْتَ

One shall be with whoever one loves (Bukhari 3688)

The human beings have the ability to absorb the manifestations of Divine light, and since they have been given the honour of being in communion with the Divine, it came to be the dictate of Divine wisdom that man be made the object of prostration by the angels.

Common questions about the soul

From the discussion of soul one is clear that the soul will not die as per the Islamic teachings and at this stage some common questions creep into the mind of everybody about the soul. In his famous book namely 'kitab-ur- ruh', Hafiz Ibn Qayim رحمہ اللہ has posed few questions and given their answers. I have chosen a few of them which are often asked and will be discussing some of these questions and answers in an abridged form so that the context is explained to readers in as simplistic, manner:

Question: What happens to soul immediately after death?

Question : Does the spirit return to the grave of the departed at the time of the interrogation, or not?

Both the questions can be tackled in the following answer:

Allah ﷻ addresses the denial of the resurrection by the unbelievers and also their claim that their lives and souls are under their own control, and they have a say in the matter of life and death. In order to refute this assumption, the following verses give the example of a dying person.

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

Then why, when the soul at death reaches the throat

And you are at that time looking on

*And Our angels are nearer to him than you, but you do not
see (56:83-85)*

When the soul reaches his throat, all of his near and dear ones look at him and express their desire that he may live longer, but none of them is able to intervene and save his life. All the people around him seem absolutely helpless. However, Allah ﷻ and his angels are nearer to the dying person than the people around him even though they are unable to see Him. In other words, that is, He is nearer to him in terms of knowledge and power. He is fully aware of the person's inner and outer conditions and has complete control over him. In short, it is not within people's power to get together and save a soul or life. Allah ﷻ is nearer to a dying person than his soul or life. Allah ﷻ has pre-designated a particular time for the soul to be separated from the body. It cannot be averted. In view of this graphic picture, the disbelievers are reminded that if they think that they cannot be resurrected after death, and they are too strong so as to overcome Allah's grasp, then they must restore the soul when it has reached the throat and is about to depart from the body or it has already departed and died. If it is not possible to do any of these, how illogical or irrational it is for man to think that he can escape the Divine grasp and reject life after death! (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

Ibn Qayim رحمه الله mentions when someone dies, the Angel

of Death comes to take his soul, no matter where he is. The dying person sees him, hears him, and speaks to him, but not with his eyes, his ears, or his tongue. For all these activities the departing soul is using some faculties which the living cannot perceive. Many instances of this have been recorded: Ibn Abid-Dunya رحمہ اللہ mentions that on the day Umar Bin Abdul Aziz رحمہ اللہ died, he said to those with him, “Sit with me.” When they sat down next to him, he said, “ I am the one You commanded and I failed you. You forbade me and I rebelled.” He said this three times. Then he said, “But there is no god but Allah.” Then he lifted his head and stared. They said, “You are looking very intently, Amir al Muminin.” He replied, “I see a presence which is neither man nor jinn.” Then he died. Fadala bin Dinar رحمہ اللہ said, “I was with Muhammad bin Wasr رحمہ اللہ when he was very near to death. He began to say, “Welcome to my Lord's angels! There is no strength nor power except by Allah!” I smelled the sweetest fragrance that I had ever smelled. Then his eyes glazed over and he died.

After the soul is taken, if it is a pure soul and has relatives in the Next World who are the people of the Garden, they come to meet the soul with yearning and great joy. They ask it about the condition of those who are still alive in this world. The angels then bear the soul from one heaven to the next until it comes into the presence of Allah, glory be to Him and may He be exalted! Then it returns and sees the washing of the body, its shrouding, and the funeral procession. It says either, “Take me forward! Take me forward!” or “Where are you taking me?” The people there cannot hear this.

If we go through the literature there are numerous versions on this and the best is the following hadith in which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “*When the believer is about to depart from this world and go forward into the Next World, angels with faces as bright as the sun descend from the heavens and sit around him in throngs stretching as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits at his head and says, “Good soul, come out to forgiveness and pleasure from Allah!” Then his soul emerges like a drop of water flows from a water-skin and the angel takes hold of it. When he has grasped it, the other angels do not leave it in his hand even for the twinkling of an eye. They take it and place it in a perfumed shroud and a fragrance issues from it like the sweetest scent of musk found on the face of the Earth. Then they bear it upwards and whenever they take it past a company of angels, they ask, 'Who is this good soul?' and the angels with the soul reply, “So-and-so, the son of so-and-so”, using the best names by which people used to call him in this world. They bring him to the lowest heaven and ask for the gate to be opened for him. It is opened for him and angels who are near Allah from each of the heavens accompany him to the subsequent heaven until he reaches to the heaven where Allah, Most Exalted, is. Allah ﷻ, Says, “Register the book of My slave in Illiyyun (in the seventh heaven) and take him back to Earth. I created them from it and I return them to it and I will bring them forth from it again.” His soul is then returned to his body and two angels come to him. They make him sit up and say to him, “Who is your Lord?” He replies, “My Lord is Allah.” They ask him, “What is your religion?” He replies, “My religion is Islam.” They ask him, “Who is*

this man who was sent among you?" He replies, "The Messenger of Allah." They ask him, "How did you come to know these things?" He replies, "I read the Book of Allah, believed it, and declared it to be true." Then a Voice from on high declares, "My slave has spoken the truth, so spread out carpets from the Garden for him and open a gate of the Garden for him!" Then some of its fragrance and perfume comes to him, his grave is expanded for him as far as the eye can see, and a man with beautiful garments and a fragrant scent comes to him and says, "Rejoice in what delights you for this is the day which you were promised." He asks, "Who are you? Yours is a face which presages good." He replies, "I am your good actions." Then he says, "O Lord, let the Last Hour come soon so that I may rejoin my family and my property!"

When an unbeliever is about to depart from this world and go forward into the Next World, angels with black faces descend from the heavens carrying rough hair-cloth and sit around him in throngs stretching as far as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death comes and sits at his head and says, "Foul soul, come out to the wrath and anger of Allah." Then his soul divides up in his body and it is dragged out like a skewer is pulled out of wet wool. Then the angel takes hold of it. When he has grasped it, the other angels do not leave it in his hand even for the twinkling of an eye. They take it and wrap it in the rough hair-cloth and a stench comes out of it like the worst stench of a corpse on the face of the Earth. Then they take it up and whenever they take it past a company of angels, they ask, "Who is this foul soul?" and the angels with the soul reply, "So-and-so, the son of so-and-so," using the worst names by which people used to call him in

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this world. They bring him to the lowest heaven and ask for the gate to be opened for him. It does not get opened.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then recited the verse,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفْتُحُ لَهُمُ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ

الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلْبِغَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخَيْطِ ط وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ

Indeed, those who deny Our verses and are arrogant toward them - the gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle. And thus do We recompense the criminals. [7: 40]

Then Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, will Say, “Register his book in Sijjin (in the lowest Earth).” Then his soul is flung down. The Prophet ﷺ then recited the verse,

خُفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيَرُ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ

تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِينٍ

Inclining [only] to Allah , not associating [anything] with Him. And he who associates with Allah - it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place.[22: 31]

Then his soul is returned to his body and two angels come and say to him, “Who is your Lord?” He replies, “Alas, alas, I do not know!” Then a voice calls from on high, “My slave has lied, so spread out carpets from the Fire for him and open a gate of the Fire for him!” Then a hot blast from it comes to him, his grave is made so narrow for him that his ribs are pressed together, and a man with a hideous face and clothing and having a foul odour comes to him and says, “Grieve on account of what has brought you disgrace for this

is the day which you were promised.” He asks, “Who are you? Yours is a face which presages evil.” He replies, “I am your bad actions.” Then he says, “O Lord, do not let the Last Hour come!” [Muslim]

Regarding the words used by the two angels who question the dead person in the grave, Allah, ﷻ says in the Qur'an,

يُنَبِّئُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ
الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter. And Allah sends astray the wrongdoers. And Allah does what He wills. [14:27]

Question: Do the spirits of the dead meet each other, visit each other, and remember each other, or not?

Answer: The souls are of two types and on basis of that the reply to question is possible.

Those that are punished. They will be facing the wrath of Allah ﷻ so their visiting anybody is out of question as they will be in abject distress.

Those that are blessed. They meet one another, visit one another and talk about what they used to do in this world and what happened to the people of this world. So each soul will be with its friends who did similar good deeds.

The soul of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is with the highest companions. Allah ﷻ says (interpretation of the meaning):

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالضَّالِّينَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor like the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions. [4:69]

In another narration it is mentioned that a Bedouin(a nomad) came to Prophet ﷺ and expressed his love and simultaneously his sorrow on not meeting Prophet ﷺ after death, the Prophet ﷺ said

أَنْتَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَبْتَ

"You will be with those whom you love." (Bukhari)

This made everybody happy on realizing that the soul of believers would meet that of holy prophet ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

[To the righteous it will be said], "O reassured soul,

ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him],

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

And enter among My [righteous] servants

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

And enter My Paradise. [89:27-30]

This is said to the soul at the time of death... And Allah ﷻ has told us that the martyrs are alive

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُزْكَوْنَ

And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision [3:169]

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

[3:170]

This indicates that they will meet one another in three ways:

- (1) They are with their Lord and are given provision, and if they are alive then they meet one another;
- (2) They rejoice at the arrival of their brothers and their meeting with them; and
- (3) The word ‘yastabshiroon’ (translated as “rejoice”) implies that they pass the good news to one another.

This is reinforced by following hadith:

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه reported that the Apostle of God ﷺ said, “It is for sure that the people of Paradise meet each other there (in Paradise). (Musnad Ahmad)

Ummu Hani asked the Prophet ﷺ such a question one day, “Will we be able to see and meet each other after we are dead?”. The Prophet ﷺ replied, “The spirit becomes a bird which feeds on the fruit of Paradise. On the Resurrection day, each spirit penetrates into their own body” (Musnad Ahmad).

Question : Does the spirit die, or does death pertains to the body alone?

Answer: People have differed on this. One school of thought says, “Spirits do not die; for they are created for

survival, and only bodies. die.” They said, “Those traditions point to this which indicate the bliss and punishment of the spirits after the separation, until God returns them to their bodies. If spirits died, bliss and punishment would be cut off from them. He said,

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

Do not consider those who have been killed in the way of God dead, but alive with their Lord, sustained, rejoicing in what God brought them of His favor, and being glad for those who have not reached them of those who come after them (2:154).

This is stated along with decisive proof that their spirits have separated from their bodies and have tasted death. The true statement is that one should say, “The death of souls is their separation from their bodies, and their going out from them” So if by their death we understand this measure, then they are ‘tasters of death’. But if someone means that they become non-existent and vanish and become pure non-existence. Then they do not die in this sense, but rather remain after their creation in bliss or in punishment, as will appear if God wills, after this, and as the text (of the Qur’an or the traditions) plainly states, that they are like that until God returns them to their bodies.

If the question is asked, “At the blast on the trumpet, do spirits remain alive as they are, or die and then come to life?” One answers, *“There is a blowing on the trumpet and a swooning of those in the heavens and those on the Earth, except whom God wills (39:68).”* God has exempted some of those in the heavens and some of those on the Earth from this

swooning. It is said, “They are the martyrs.” This is the statement of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn Abbas, and Sayid Ibn Jubayr رحمهم الله. Other group says, “They are Jibrail and Mikail and Israfil and the Israel عليهم السلام.” This is the statement of Muqatil رحمهم الله and others. Other opinion is that they are those of the nymphs of Paradise who are in the Garden and those who are in the Fire and its storehouse, of the people of punishment.” A reference to this is in Qur’an,

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَىٰ وَوَقَّعَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

*“They will not taste death therein except the first death, and
He will have protected them from the punishment of
Hellfire”[44:56]*

Other school of thought says that the spirit dies and tastes death because it is a soul, and Qur’an says

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

Every soul will taste death [3:185]

وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

*And there will remain the Face of your Lord, Owner of
Majesty and Honor[55:27]*

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Everything perishes except this face[28:88]

They said, “If angels die, then human souls are all the more likely to die.” They said that the Allah ﷻ said concerning the people of the Fire,

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ قَوْمًا فَأَعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

‘Our Lord, Thou hast killed us twice and hast brought us to

life twice . ' [40:11]

The first death is this seen one, which is the body's and the other one is the spirit's. Another verse in Qur'an substantiates this claim,

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

“How do you disbelieve in God, when you are dead? For He gave your life, then He causes you to die, then He restores you to life (2:28).”

This group is refuted by the one which is of the opinion that that souls do not die by giving following explanation to the above verse. They were dead when they were seed in the loins of their fathers and in the wombs of their mothers. Then He brought them to life after that, then He caused them to die, then He restores them to life on the Day of Resurrection. There is not in that causing their spirits to die before the Day of Resurrection, for otherwise there would be three deaths.

Question: Where do the souls settle in [the period] between death and the resurrection? In what state they exist?

The souls stay in an intermediate place after death and that is called 'barzakh' and that is the residence within the graves. The term barzakh means a “divider” or “barrier” [i.e. the life within the graves is the separator between this world and the Hereafter], and the life within the graves is [therefore] termed as the life of the barzakh. Within it are amazing affairs; in it is blessing or punishment, either a pit from the pits of the Hell-Fire, or a garden from the gardens of Paradise. The dead remain in their graves until Allah ﷻ wishes to resurrect and gather them for accountability and recompense and so this residence is a waiting station [until resurrection]. There are numerous ahadith which support this

view:

Bara Ibn Aazib رضي الله عنه said, “We went out with the Prophet ﷺ to a burial of a man from the Ansar (original inhabitants of Madina) until we arrived at the grave, and he still had not been placed in the slot of the grave. Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat down and we sat around him. You would have thought that birds were upon our heads from our silence, and in the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a stick which he was poking the ground with. Then he started looking at the sky and looking at the Earth and looking up down three times. Then he said to us, “*Ask Allah for refuge from the torment of the grave*”, he repeated this command two or three times. Then he said, “O Allah I seek refuge in you from the torment of the grave.” (three times).

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِقَبْرَيْنِ فَقَالَ إِنَّهُمَا لَيُعَذَّبَانِ وَمَا

يُعَذَّبَانِ فِي كَبِيرٍ أَمَّا أَحَدُهُمَا فَيُعَذَّبُ فِي الْبُؤْلِ وَأَمَّا الْآخَرُ فَيُعَذَّبُ فِي الْغَيْبَةِ

Abu Bakrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ passed by two graves and he said, “Verily, they are both being punished and not for something major. As for one, he is punished for the habit of soiling himself with urine. As for the other, he is punished for the habit of backbiting.” (Ibn Maja 349)

عَنْ عِثْمَانَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الْقَبْرَ أَوَّلُ مَنْزِلٍ مِنْ مَنَازِلِ الْآخِرَةِ فَإِنْ

نَجَا مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَيْسَرُ مِنْهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْجُ مِنْهُ فَمَا بَعْدَهُ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ رَأَيْتُ مَنْظَرًا قَطُّ إِلَّا

الْقَبْرَ أَفْطَحَ مِنْهُ

Uthman رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Verily, the grave is the first stage of the Hereafter. Whoever is saved from it, whatever comes after will be easier for him. If he is

not saved from it, whatever comes after will be harder for him. I have never seen anything more frightening than the grave.” (Tirmidhi 2308)

عَنْ الْبَرَاءِ بْنِ عَازِبٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ قَالَ نَزَلَتْ فِي عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ فَيُقَالُ لَهُ مَنْ رَبُّكَ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَنَبِيِّي مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ

فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

Al-Bara ibn Azib رضي الله عنه reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, “The verse, ‘Allah keeps firm those who have faith in the firm word’ (14:27) was revealed about punishment in the grave. He will be asked who is your lord? He will say: Allah is my Lord and Muhammad is my prophet. That is the meaning of the words of Allah Almighty, ‘Allah keeps firm those who have faith in the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter.’” (Muslim 2871)

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُوجِبُ إِلَى أُنْكُمْ تُفْتَنُونَ فِي الْقُبُورِ قَرِيبًا مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدَّجَالِ فَأَمَّا الْمُؤْمِنُ أَوِ الْمُسْلِمُ فَيَقُولُ مُحَمَّدٌ جَاءَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَأَجَبْنَا وَأَمَّا فَيُقَالُ نَمْ صَاحِبًا عَلِمْنَا أَنَّكَ مُوقِنٌ وَأَمَّا الْمُنَافِقُ أَوِ الْمُرْتَابُ فَيَقُولُ لَا أَذْرِي سَمِعْتُ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ شَيْئًا فَقُلْتُهُ

Asma bint Abi Bakr رضي الله عنها reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “It has been revealed to me that you will be put to trial in the grave, similar to the trial of the False Messiah. As for the believer or Muslim, he will say: Muhammad came to us with clear evidence and we answered him and believed in him. It will be said: Sleep in peace, for we knew you had

conviction. As for the hypocrite or the doubter, he will say: I do not know, for I heard people saying something and I repeated it.” (Bukhari 6857)

عَنْ الْبَرَاءِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى يُعَذِّبُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ قَالَ فِي الْقَبْرِ إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ مَنْ رَبُّكَ وَمَا
دِينُكَ وَمَنْ نَبِيُّكَ

Al-Bara ؓ reported: Regarding the saying of Allah Almighty, “Allah will keep firm those who had faith in the firm word, in the worldly life and in the Hereafter,” (14:27), the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “It is in the grave when it is said to him: Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?.” (Tirmidhi 3120)

The question arises that often the graves are opened due to various reasons and one does not see anything except body with same size of grave as it was when dug. Many people are not buried and their bodies get destroyed by fire, eaten by wild beasts etc. In all these instances how can one justify they are in bliss or in punishment. The answer given is that the grave mentioned in ahadith is not the pit which we dig in Earth but it refers to the state in which one is after death and that state is sometimes referred to as ‘barzakh, or just ‘grave’. The punishment in grave has been described as something like a dreamer being tortured but no one around him is aware of what he is experiencing in dream and yet he suffers during this period. The majority of the scholars are of the opinion that punishment or reward in the barzakh is felt by both body and soul. Hafiz Ibn Qayim ؒ has given an explanation, which is based on authentic traditions, which

will help to answer many more queries which can come in mind.

The soul is connected to the body in five different ways, to which different rules apply.

[1] Its connection to the body as a fetus in his mother's womb.

[2] Its connection to the body after a person is born.

[3] Its connection to the body when a person is asleep, when the soul is connected in one way and separated from it in another way.

[4] Its connection to the body in *al-Barzakh* (the period between a person's death and the Day of Resurrection), when it has departed from the body and separated from it, but is not separated completely in such a way that there is no connection at all. There are *ahadith* which indicate that the soul is returned to the body when somebody sends the greeting of salaam to a deceased person. This returning is of a special nature which does not mean that the life is restored to the body before the Day of Resurrection.

[5] Its connection to the body on the Day when bodies will be resurrected. This is the most perfect type of connection to the body, and has no comparison to the previous types, because after that the body will never die, sleep or have anything wrong with it.[75,76,77]

Heart

As a doctor when the word heart is read by me immediately what comes to my mind is a lump of flesh with chambers inside for blood to come in and move out. Blood being pushed into vessels to reach whole body and in this process, heart pumps approximately 2000 gallons of blood daily by beating about 70 times a minute for whole life. When it stops it is death and this is known to even kids, so this is an apparent knowledge of the heart.

Now I divulge from medicine to the common language wherein we use so many words which on medical grounds are simply unexplainable and yet all of us use them in our daily parlance. There is a divorce amongst a lovely couple and one of them says, “My heart is broken”. A student who has not prepared well for the examination says, “My heart is full of fear of exams”. When the story of Tartar invasion was narrated to a group of students they said, “They were heartless”.

Mr. Robert Tools was the first patient to receive the AbioCor artificial heart. After the operation, Mr. Tools recovered quite well and was able to leave the hospital. He suffered a stroke. After the stroke, Dr. Laman Gray, who carried out the surgery, reported, “Tool’s condition is probably a little better than a person with a [real] heart, since we don’t have to worry about the heart itself.” [78]

After common usage let us see how heart is used in poetry. The greatest poet in English *William Shakespeare* writes:

*“Hear my soul speak. Of the very instant that I saw you, did
my heart fly at your service”*

*“My crown is in my heart, not on my head; not decked with
diamonds and Indian stones, nor to be seen: my crown is
called content, a crown it is that seldom kings enjoy
“A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue.”[79]*

John Keats speaks of heart as *“Heard melodies are
sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.”*

William Wordsworth uses the term as, *“The music in my
heart I bore long after it was heard no more.”*

These are a few of the statements which are used even today at the so-called peak of science and nobody calls them incorrect, so the heart connotes something much more than the anatomical pump read by us and touched by the surgeons.

Pearce studied the electromagnetic fields around our heart for more than ten feet and hypothesized these are in constant interaction with those surrounding other hearts and these causes emotional interaction between people. The heart is like a second brain and has its own intelligence. It is an extremely sensitive organ that communicates in image and feeling. [80]

Buhner hypothesized that the heart and brain have a direct connection to each other and are in constant communication. Heart emits an energy field similar in shape to the Earth itself. The hearts electromagnetic field is 5000 times larger than the brain. We can communicate with the world through this silent electromagnetic energy as

everything has an electrical impulse. “The field of the heart contains within it everything you are, everything that is within you. Every thought you have, every unmet desire, psychological need, and wound”. A coherent heart affects the brain wave pattern not only of the person achieving coherence, but also of any person with whom it comes into contact. Heart coherence can be obtained by thinking imaginal thoughts of beauty, love and caring through the hearts mind. This empathetic energy has powerful healing properties and can be carried electromagnetically in our bodies and into the world as our torus connects with other energy fields[81]

Larry Dossey, while investigating the power of prayer, has found ‘Love’ to be a powerful healing emotion and intimately related to health. He looked at many studies of non localized healing which pointed to love being a kind of exalted, unspecialized telepathy that connects distant organisms through empathy. He considered that the empathy, compassion and love seem to form a literal bond between living things. He considered love as one of the greatest examples of the power of our heart which causes a tremendous expansion of the heart, a flood of DHEA, testosterone and hormones. He said, “It literally moves the flesh, it pushes matter around - as the blushing and palpitations experienced by lovers arrest.” [82]

Pearsall mentioned that one of the most powerful experiences of falling in love is entraining, when one's own heart falls into energetic synchronization with another heart. Two hearts beat as one, as the qualities of nurturing, connecting and integrating are felt.[83]

Qalb

Now we move to the Islamic description of the heart wherein it is called as ‘Qalb’, which is defined as an entity which is ‘changing its direction’ or ‘turning about’. Raghīb al-Isfahani defines qalb as, “Changing something from its existing state to another one.” Al-Firuzabadi states that the word qalb refers to ‘turning and rotating an object’. Ibn Hasham mentions four meanings of word qalb namely: heart, intellect, synopsis of everything and the best part of anything. Ibn Faris described it as the pure or valued part of anything and to turn one thing from facing one way to another. [78,83,84]

The Qur’an uses certain verbal forms derived from the ‘root q-l-b’

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ
يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

[Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about – (24:37)

The same definition can be sought in hadith as well:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُكْثِرُ أَنْ يَقُولَ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ

ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَمَّا بِكَ وَبِمَا جِئْتَ بِهِ فَهَلْ تَخَافُ عَلَيْنَا

قَالَ نَعَمْ إِنَّ الْقُلُوبَ بَيْنَ أَصْبُعَيْنِ مِنَ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ يُقَلِّبُهَا كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

Anas (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would often say, “O turner of the hearts, affirm my heart upon your religion!” I said, “O Messenger of Allah, we believe in you and in that with which you were sent. Do you fear for us?”

The Prophet said, “Yes, for the hearts are between the fingers of Allah. He turns them whichever way he wills.” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi 2140)

عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ قَالَتْ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَكْثَرَ دُعَاءَكَ يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي

عَلَى دِينِكَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ آدَمِيٌّ إِلَّا وَقَلْبُهُ

بَيْنَ أَصْبُعَيْنِ مِنَ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ شَاءَ أَقَامَ وَمَنْ شَاءَ أَرَاغَ

فَتَلَا مُعَاذَ رَبِّنَا لَا تُرْغِ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا

Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها reported: I said, “O Messenger of Allah, you often supplicate saying: O turner of the hearts, affirm my heart upon your religion.” The Messenger of Allah, ﷺ said, “O Umm Salamah, there is no human but that his heart is between the fingers of Allah. Whoever he wills is made steadfast and whoever he wills is deviated.” Mu’adh recited the verse, “Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after you have guided us.” (3:8)

(Tirmidhi 3522)

Why is qalb located in anatomical heart?

The physical heart is aligned with the spiritual center for several reasons. Since its root in Arabic is q-l-b (qalaba-

turning around), the physical heart is constantly fluctuating, oscillating, moving so qalb matches the heart in this feature. Heart constantly moves pure and impure blood so as to keep body healthy and supplied by pure blood, in similar way qalb keeps on getting dirty by sins and cleaned by good deeds. In the hadith of holy prophet ﷺ

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً
نُكِنَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ سُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ وَإِنْ عَادَ زِيدَ
فِيهَا حَتَّى تَغْلُو قَلْبُهُ وَهُوَ الرَّانُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, when the servant commits a sin, a black mark appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah has mentioned: No, rather a covering is over their hearts from what they have earned." (83:14)
(Tirmidhi 3334)

The heart is located in center of the body and if it stops that is the end of physical life, so it is an ideal location for the center of spiritual life.[84,85]

Importance of heart

Holy Qur'an describes the criteria of success in the everlasting world on the basis of the person leaving the world with a clean heart.

إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart (clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifaq (hypocrisy))". (26: 89)

It may also be noted that 'sound heart' literally means a healthy heart. But according to Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه here it means the heart of a believer that testifies the Oneness of Allah and is pure from shirk.

The importance of the subject can best be elucidated by the saying of Allah's Messenger ﷺ in which he described the soundness of body depends on the soundness of the heart.

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ. أَلَا

وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

Narrated An-Numan bin Bashir رضي الله عنه I heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ saying, "Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart." (Bukhari)

Wherever the heart is mentioned in hadith and holy Qur'an it does not reflect the anatomical heart but the spiritual heart.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى

أَجْسَامِكُمْ، وَلَا إِلَى صُورِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated: Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah does not look at your figures, nor at your attire but He looks at your hearts [and deeds]." [Muslim]

In another hadith Allah's Messenger ﷺ pointed out that the most important quality of human being i.e., piety is

present in qalb to signify the importance of qalb.

التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ

Righteousness is here, and he pointed to his chest three times. (Muslim 2564)

Mawlana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi رحمته describes the heart's superiority over the Kaaba in the following manner, "The Kaaba is a structure built by Azar's son Ibrahim عليه السلام. The heart, however, is where God, the All-Majestic the All-Great, directs His gaze."

Hujwiri رحمته states that it is even more valuable than the Kaaba.

Synonyms of heart

In order to understand its functions, we need to know what words are used for it or related to it in the holy Qur'an. These are 'Sadr', 'Qalb', 'Fuad' and 'Lubb'. These have been described beautifully by Hakim Al Tirmidhi رحمته by the example, sadr is just the white of an eye, qalb is as the black portion of the eye, pupil is the fuad and the light which enters pupil is Lubb. Let us see how these words are used in holy Qur'an.[86,87]

Sadr: The word 'al-Sadr' means 'something tall and fronted', 'Predecessor and starting of everything', 'chest as part of body', in which there is al-qalb. Holy Qur'an mentions it 44 times. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

Did We not cause your bosom to be wide open for your benefit? (94:1)

The word ‘*sharh*’ literally denotes ‘to open’. In the present context, it is to cause the bosom to be wide open to comprehend the Divine mysteries. The verse signifies that Allah illuminated his bosom with wisdom, Divine light and peace and made it spacious, vast and wide as is said in another verse:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ

So, he whom Allah wills to give guidance, He opens his heart for Islam [6:125]

The Holy Prophet's ﷺ bosom was expanded to receive the knowledge and wisdom and the gracious morals and ethical qualities, which the greatest philosophers could not match. As a result of this expansion of heart, ‘*tawajjuh ilal-makhluq*’ (attentiveness to the creation) did not disturb his attentiveness to and concentration on Allah ﷻ. Some of the authentic traditions report that the angels, with Allah's permission, physically opened the blessed chest of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ

بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with Faith, but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment". (16: 106)

Qalb : The term has been described previously and this word has been used 168 times in holy Qur'an, 36 times in verb form and 132 times in noun form.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

Verily, therein is indeed a reminder for him who has a heart

or gives ear while he is heedful". (Surah 50: 37)

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه has said that here the word qalb [heart] means 'aql' [intellect] because the center of intellect is heart. Some scholars of Qur'an say that 'heart' here refers to life, because the axis of life is heart. Thus, the verse means only that person will be able to benefit from the advices and lessons of the Qur'an who has life or a sound understanding with which he comprehends. The one devoid of intellect cannot benefit from the Qur'an. The message of the above verses is that two types of people benefit: [1] a person who has the mind and the intellect who understands it in his mind and accepts it; and [2] a person who gives his ears and listens to the Divine verses with an attentive heart, while his heart is present and not absent. Qazi Thanullah Panipati رحمته الله interprets that the first type of people are called 'kamileen' [thoroughly proficient members of the Islamic community]. The second type are their followers and sincere seekers of the Reality, who are under the direction of a spiritual guide and who, on account of their sincerity and purity of heart, accept the teachings of the religion.

إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart (clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifaq (hypocrisy))". (26: 89).

It may also be noted that "sound heart" literally means a healthy heart. But according to Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه here it means the heart of a believer that testifies the Oneness of Allah and is pure from shirk. The same interpretation is reported from Mujahid رحمته الله, Hasan al-Basari رحمته الله, Sayid ibn al-Musayyab رحمته الله who says that the sound heart is only that of a believer because the heart of a disbeliever is sick. The Holy Qur'an

says, *In their heart there is a malady* (2:10)

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُون لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

So have they not traveled through the Earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts. (22:46)

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَصْلَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Have you seen him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his ilah (god), and Allah knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who then will guide him after Allah? Will you not then remember?" (45: 23).

Obviously, no unbeliever claims that his desires are his object of worship. Keeping this in view, this verse of the Qur'an indicates that 'worship' actually means 'obedience.' Thus anyone who undertakes to obey someone against the obedience of Allah ﷻ makes him the object of his worship instead of Allah ﷻ. There are people who ignore what Allah ﷻ has declared lawful and unlawful or what He has permitted and what he has forbidden. People who do not care what Allah ﷻ has forbidden and follow their whims and fancies, their desires are their god. Though they may not have uttered the same by word. Abu Umamah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Of all the deities worshipped under the firmament of the Earth, the most detestable one in

the sight of Allah is hawa, that is, selfish desires.” Shaddad Ibn Aws ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “A wise person is he who keeps his desires under control and works for life after death; and sinful is he who runs after his desires and yet expects the best in the Hereafter.” Sahl Ibn Abdullah Tustari ؓ said, “Your ailment is your selfish desires. And if you oppose them, it will turn into your cure”. (Ma’ariful Qur’an).

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not then think deeply in the Qur’an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)? (47:24)

The meaning of this phrase is synonymous with similar phrases in other verses of the Qur’an where words like “*khatm* -[Allah] has set a seal [on their hearts]” have been used to describe how the disbelievers refuse to employ their hearts for the comprehension of truth. As a natural consequence their capacities to distinguish right from wrong have become atrophied. Carelessly, committing sins all the time is the main cause of this. Allah forbid! (Ma’ariful Qur’an)

Fuad : The term ‘al-Fuad’ is formed from the root word of Faada (flame, burning). It is used mostly to describe the ‘heart full of intense emotion’ and has been used 16 times in holy Qur’an. This is explicit in the following verse,

وَاصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ فِرْعَاوْنَ كَاذَةً لِّشُبُهَيْ بِهٖ لَوْلَا اَنْ رَّبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

And the heart of Moses’ mother became empty [of all else].

*She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had
We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the
believers(28:10)*

The intense emotional state present in this situation has been referred to as ‘fuad’.

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

*“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge.
Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the ‘fuwad’ feelings- about
all those [one] will be questioned” (17:36).*

It means that the ear will be asked as to what it kept hearing throughout its life. The eye will be asked as to what it kept seeing throughout its life. The heart will be asked as to what did it kept cooking in it and what was it that it believed in throughout its life. If things were heard through the ears, the hearing of which was not permissible in Shariah, then punishment will follow the question. If things were seen through the eyes, the seeing of which was not permissible, then punishment will follow the question. If one planted a belief in the heart contrary to the Qur’an and Sunnah, or nursed a baseless blame in the heart regarding someone, then punishment will follow the question. Perhaps the ears, the eyes and the heart have been particularized here on the basis that Allah ﷻ has blessed man with sense and consciousness through them. Again in Surah Hud, Allah ﷻ used the word fuad,

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ

وَذِكْرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And each [story] We relate to you from the news of the

*messengers is that by which We make firm your heart (fuad).
And there has come to you, in this, the truth and an
instruction and a reminder for the believers.” (11:120)*

Lubb: The meaning of the term ‘al-Lubb’, formed from the root word of ‘Labba’, is ‘hold on to a case’. Lexically, the word of al-lub has many meanings namely ‘something pure and elected’ and ‘consistent and consequent’ . It appears in Qur’an 16 times .

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*And there is for you in legal retribution [saving off] life, O
you [people] of understanding, that you may become
righteous. [2:179]*

Most of scholars interpret ‘ulul-albab’ with the meaning ‘ulul-uqul’ i.e., those who have a sense. It often refers to those believers who are in constant touch with the inner core of the heart that recognizes its Creator and Cherisher. The heart which is free from slightest disobedience of Allah ﷻ reaches the state of Lubb. [86,87]

What has been mentioned about Qalb?

Hasan al-Basri رحمه الله (642-728), an eminent scholar in Basra, Iraq, is one of the greatest scholars who in addition to his fame in the hadith had a significant contribution to the understanding of the knowledge of the heart. His concern with purification of the heart in order to obtain knowledge of God is centered on his idea of ‘ilmul-qulub’, the knowledge of the Hearts. He founded the view that the closeness to

Allah can be achieved only by removing everything (which He dislikes) from the heart. And then one keeps on drawing close to Allah ﷻ as he performs the supererogatory acts after fulfilling the compulsory ones.

Harith bin Asad al-Muhashibi (781-857) was deeply influenced by the works of Hassan al Basri (r) and worked on the knowledge of the heart. He considered the heart as the center of mysticism and considered constant reflection on it as the crux of the mysticism. Heart is the center for special knowledge of the Divine i.e, ‘marifah’ (gnosis). This term was defined by him as ‘the heart's recognition of its need of God, its approach onto Him and to the invisible world and the vision thereof’. A further function of the heart was considered as a protagonist in the struggle between the nafs (the earthly, sensual portion of the person which desires this World) and the aql (which desires the Divine).

Muhammad al-Baghawi al-Nuri (840-908) was referred to as ‘Commander of Hearts’ by Junayd (r). He also was from Baghdad. Although cited in various Sufi sources such as the Kashf al-Mahjub, his actual treatises appear to have been lost until the discovery of his Maqamatul-Qulub (Stations of the Heart) by Paul Nwyia in the Mid 1970's. In this he asserts that God cannot be understood by the rational faculties, but can only be reached by relying on the heart to obtain knowledge. The heart passes through four layers and four ‘stages’ of understanding. These stages correspond exactly to Tirmidhi's layers and stages of heart.

Hakim al-Tirmidhi (750/760-869) a famous jurist born in Khorasan, Iran, (He is not the famous muhadith who authored Jamia al Tirmidhi) considered Qalb as the spiritual

center of the person and classifies it as an object of awareness and which distinguishes between good and ugly. He categorizes the qalb into four stations:

The First Station —The Sadr

The Arabic word ‘sadr’ most commonly refers to the ‘first’ and foremost of something’, or it is the ‘front of something’, it is hence allied with the breast or bosom of a human. According to Tirmidhi, the sadr is the place of the struggle between the desires and wishes of the nafs and the desire for purity of the qalb. Temptations to evil and rancor attempt to enter the inner self of the person through this portal. There is no limit to the amount of expansion and contraction which is possible. Thus, within the sadr of a believer, the light of Islam may expand to the extent that all traces of the darkness of unbelief and doubt are completely pushed from the sadr. On the other hand, the sadr of an unbeliever (kafir) or hypocrite (munafiq) may become so contracted with the darkness of unbelief that it is completely devoid of any light flowing from belief. Due to the presence of the nafs and its desires and influence, the sadr is a place of possible rancor within the individual. The difference between the sadr of a believer and an unbeliever is that an unbeliever continues to suffer from the whisperings of Satan as well as from those of the nafs. In addition, it suffers from sorrow and calamity. Within the sadr of a believer, these whisperings are not heard. However, for one whose sadr has been expanded to the light of Islam, one may still suffer when hearing something evil or impure. According to Tirmidhi, this is the

case with the Prophets. Their sudoor are so expanded to Islam that they get pain in their sudoor when 'shirk' (attributing partnership to God) is uttered. The Prophets did not, however, suffer from the whisperings of Shaitan or their own nufus. Sadr is the abode of Islam, and one at this level of the mystic journey is called a Muslim. Sadr is like a passage of entering and exiting of the knowledge which can be acquired and then forgotten.

Second stage —The Qalb

Qalb is based on the three consonant root q-l-b, which in its verb form means to altering/ changing/ oscillating, which is considered to be the reason for naming it so. Within this layer is housed the 'light of faith'- 'Nur-i-Iman'. Which means that the person has an acceptance of God's revelation within his or her heart and has moved from the level of Muslim to the level of Moomin (Believer). Several other attributes are enumerated in relation to their location within the qalb. Included in this list are: the lights of submissiveness (khushu), piety (taqwa), love (muhabbah), consent (rida), certainty (yaqin), fear (khawf), hope (rija), patience (sabr), contentment (qinayat), calmness (sakinah), humility (ikhbat), softness (lain), tranquility (itma'ninah) and purity (taharah). The qalb has the ability to send messages to the sadr. Tirmidhi explains that these messages may be such things as what he terms 'subtleties of wisdom' (lataif-ul-hikmah) or 'indications of grace' (shawahid-ul-minnah). As for these messages, they are types of knowledge which are rooted in the qalb. Knowledge which has its source in the qalb is a particular type of knowledge, completely unlike the type of knowledge found in the Sadr. That knowledge which is

centered in the qalb is placed there by the Divine; no amount of study or memorization can place it there but once there, it does not depart.

Third station —The Fuad

The root letters ‘f-a-d’ forming the word fuad denote warmth and extreme heat. It is located within the qalb and influences the qalb. Thus, when a man profits from knowledge, it is first the fuad which obtains benefit and then the qalb. A person at this level of the spiritual journey to the Centre is called an ‘Aarif’. The Fuad is the seat of gnosis (maarifat), spiritual thoughts (khawatir) and vision (ruyah). Ruyah is perhaps the most significant attribute of the Fuad. Both the qalb and the Fuad see (i.e., they are given the attribute of ruyah), but the essence of their sight is different and they are dependent upon one another. The fuad truly sees and experiences the vision of externalities. Thus, the fuad sees and the qalb knows.

Fourth Station —The Lubb

Lubb and its plural form ‘albab’ are based on the root ‘l-b-b’. This word most commonly refers to a ‘kernel’, ‘pith’ the interior of fruit. Lubb may also refer to something's self, substance or essence. Some scholars state that the term ‘lubb’ refers to the illuminated mind free of all kinds of stain and blemish. This maqam is the last of the stations as described by Tirmidhi. Lubb is broken down by Tirmidhi to illustrate the meaning of the letters it is composed of. As one only reaches this stage through the succor of the Divine and His blessings, the first letter of the word ‘lam’, refers to lutf;

God's overwhelming kindness towards His servants. The doubled 'ba' points to the favors and goodness (birr) bestowed by God in the Beginning (bidayah) as well as the ongoing (baqa) blessings (barakah) granted to those who strive in the way of quelling the Self to approach the Real. Within this station lies the 'Light of Unification', the 'nur-ut-tawhid' and 'Light of Uniqueness', the 'nur-ut-tafrid.' It is the most perfect Light and the greatest power. To follow the analogies Tirmidhi has already presented within his map, the sadr is the white of an eye, qalb is as the black portion of the eye, pupil is the fuad and the light which enters pupil is lubb.

'Tafsir-i-Jalalain'(an authentic commentary of the Holy Qur'an) mentions that the Qalb is an instrument which has been given the capability of perceiving the divine Attributes. [8,9,10,11]

Imam Ghazali رحمه الله a Persian origin scholar (1058-1111), wrote extensively on this subject. He considered the heart being a spiritual entity that is the center of human consciousness, conscience, feeling, perception, mind and will; what is referred to as the Human Reality (Haqiqat-ul-Insaniyya) and philosophers refer it as 'nafs al-natiqa' or the Reasoning (or articulating) Soul. He aspires to explain that the heart belongs to God rather than the human being, by defining it as the 'divine subtle faculty.' It is perpetually the heart that knows, perceives, comprehends, interprets, sees, hears, thinks, believes and denies and it is, as such, a divinely bestowed gift to human beings. Imam Gazali رحمه الله in his famous book 'Ihya-ul-Uloom' also sees the heart as that aspect in man which has the capacity to understand the reality of things. In this book he states that where the word 'qalb' is

used in the Qur'an and the Sunnah it is intended to mean that which understands or comprehends in man and which knows the reality or the essence of things. He develops the comparison between the heart and the other organs. Salient in this comparison is the heart's always being in a position of Imam (dominance and power) over the other organs. According to Ghazali رحمہ اللہ, the relationship between the heart and the other organs is akin to that between a ruler and his subjects, a commander and his men, and a master and his slaves and servants. Just as servants carry out every command of their master without hesitation, a human being's other organs and limbs carry out the orders and commands of the heart with the same submissiveness and obedience. The heart puts all the organs to work, while the organs execute its commands immediately and without delay. Such is Ghazali's belief and conviction in this approach that he sees no harm in comparing this relationship to the relationship between God and the angels. According to Ghazali رحمہ اللہ, something which needs to be done in order to rescue the heart from the assaults of Satan is to cleanse it of 'hawa' (vain desires) and carnal desire. Those who follow their impulses, as opposed to Lord's will, are slaves of their vain desires. While stating, "Do you ever consider him who has taken his lusts and fancies for his deity", Qur'an draws attention to this point. The heart is a fortress and Satan, an enemy wants to enter that fortress, take possession of it and dominate it. Protecting the fortress from the enemy can only be possible through securing its doors and covering its gaps. The doors that Satan uses are such doors as lust, anger, greed, envy, gluttony, love of adornment, ambition, wealth and worldly possessions,

stinginess, fear of poverty, enmity, arrogance, doubt in matters of faith and suspicion. It is imperative that these doors be closed in order to avert Satan's intervention and assault. Maintaining that these doors can only be tightly shut through remembrance of Lord and through ridding oneself of idle passions, Ghazali رحمه الله moreover refers to taqwa (piety) and presents it in terms of the impact of such remembrance.

The gnostics are not inclined much towards the knowledge that is obtained through learning, but the knowledge which is derived from inspiration. For this reason, they do not aspire to read, study written works or research the proofs contained within them. On the contrary, they maintain that the method for acquiring knowledge is struggle with the carnal self, eradicating evil qualities, severing connection with everything and turning to God with one's entire being. When God reigns supreme in the heart, mercy descends there with ease (faydh) and light shines in the heart (ishraq), the sadr finds peace, the secret of the unseen is revealed to it (inkishaf), the veil of the heart is lifted with the blessing of mercy and the truths of the divine mystery begin to shine in the heart. The responsibility falling upon the servant here is to purify the heart at the door of mercy which God Himself will open, preparing for this with a will full of good intention and then awaiting God's mercy.

In his Minhaj-ul-Abidin, he says there are five principles when dealing with the heart. [90]

1. Allah ﷻ is aware of everything that happens in it:

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

(Allah) knows of (the tricks) that deceive the eyes, and all that the hearts conceal. (40:19)

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا

Allah knows (all) that is in your hearts: and Allah is All- Knowing, Most Forbearing. (33:51)

إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

Surely he knows the contents of your chests. (11:5)

From above verses it becomes explicitly clear that He is aware of everything that we plan to do and when we do something what intentions are. The knowledge of this concept and contemplating on this aspect forms the basis of the famous practice of ‘muraqabah’ (vigilance).

2. Allah ﷻ looks to your heart and not to your bodies

The Messenger ﷺ said, “Surely Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your forms. Rather He looks to your hearts and he pointed to his chest.” (Muslim)

We spent lot of time and energy in making sure we are presentable and become concerned about a speck of dirt on our clothes because people see it, yet we do not take care of the place that Allah looks at.

3. The heart is the king of the body

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Surely in your body is a piece of flesh and if it is healthy the whole body is healthy and if it is spoiled the whole body is spoiled. It is the heart.” (Bukhari)

4. The heart is the treasure chest of all virtue.

It is the seat of the intellect and the place of gnosis (maarifah), which is the cause of one’s eternal happiness in both worlds. It contains the inner sight (basira) and intention (niyah) and various sciences (ulum) and wisdom (hikam).

5. The heart is unique in five ways:

- It works harder than any other organ. The other organs

get rest, for example one may close one's eyes or mouth but heart cannot stop till death.

- Khawatir (thoughts) come to it like incessant rain or arrows pouring down upon it without any respite.
- Man's enemy, Satan, targets it directly and is perched ready to attack it at any time.
- Its dangers affect it very quickly.
- It is extremely difficult to cure it as it is unseen and one does not know it is sick until the blameworthy trait has damaged it. It is called the heart (qalb) because it is quick to turn (taqallab) . Therefore, it requires research into its dangers, close inspection of its states (muhasabah) and exercise (riyada).

He also mentioned,

“Other sins are like the mosquitoes hatched in a swampland and the sins of the heart are like the swampland itself. Unless the swampland (i.e. sins of the heart) is not eradicated, it would not be possible to get rid of the mosquitoes (i.e. other sins).”

Oh Lord, make our hearts firm on your path (religion) and turn our faces towards You.

Al Razi رحمه الله (1150-1210), was the famous philosopher and classical commentator of the Qur'an from Herat in Afghanistan. He affirmed in his tafsir that the abode of knowledge (ilm) is the heart. He stated that the heart is the place of ignorance and neglect, and that the verse 'hearts with which to understand' suggests that the 'heart is an instrument of perception and hence it is the abode of reflection.' It would follow that ignorance is associated with the blindness of the heart because if the heart is not open to

perception, it is in fact left in a state of ignorance. He discerns two fundamental antagonizing forces within the soul of man: a positive force, the heart (Qalb), which turns man towards God and a negative force, the self (nafs), which induces man to turn towards his ego. He explains this tendency of the heart by two parallel interpretations of the following verse,

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهِ

God has not assigned to any man two hearts (qalbayn) within his breast (jawf)." (33:4)

Man has only one heart which is turned to his lord (Rabb). It is compared to the face (wajh) which is always turned to God and inclined to Him alone. Tustari رحمته feels that this verse refers to one who turns his face (matawwafin) to God with the intention (qasd) of turning around (iltifaat). He who pays attention to anyone other than God, it is not intent on turning to his Lord (Rabb).

Ibn Arabi رحمته (1165-1240) makes an important distinction regarding two aspects of the heart, "The fuad is the heart of the heart (qalb al-qalb): just as the heart (qalb) has vision, so the heart of the heart has vision. The heart's vision can be affected by blindness, when it departs from the Real by preferring other than Him (Allah) after He has made it close – ['It is not the eyes that are blind but the hearts which are in their chests' (22: 46)]. But the heart of the heart does not suffer blindness because it does not know the created world; it has no attachment except to its Master." At other place he mentions, "He made the heart from the world of the Invisible (ghayb) and the 'face' [of the heart] from the

world of the Visible (shahada). For the face He specified a direction in which to prostrate, naming that His 'House'. The House receives him whenever the heart turns its face in that direction in prayer... For the heart He specified His own Self, glory to Him, so that it shouldn't seek other than Him. He orders it to prostrate to Him, and if it prostrates due to an unveiling, then it will never lift its head again from its prostration in this world or the next. One who prostrates without unveiling lifts his head [again], and the lifting means heedlessness of God and forgetting God in the midst of things".

He says, "Heart is the center of 'irfani' knowledge". He expresses his stance in this manner, "Our knowledge is neither acquired from word and expression, nor from the lips of human beings, nor from books and pages, on the contrary, our knowledge consists of the manifestations emerging in the heart when one is overcome by 'wajd' (ecstasy) and which 'annihilates their existence.'

"The greatest sin is that which kills the heart, and it is not killed by anything except lack of knowledge of God, which is called ignorance (jahl), because it [the heart] is the 'house' (or temple, bayt) which God has chosen from this human formation for Himself. However, it has been misappropriated by this usurper (ghaṣib), who intervenes between it and its Owner. It is the greatest oppressor of his soul, because it prevents her from [receiving] the goodness which would [otherwise] accrue to her from the Owner of this house, had it but left it [the heart] to Him. Such is the deprivation of ignorance".

"When God created your body, He placed within it a

Kaaba, which is your heart. He made this temple of the heart the noblest of houses in the person of faith (mu'min). He informed us that the heavens, in which there is the Frequented House (al-bayt al-mamur), and the Earth, in which there is the [physical] Kaaba, do not encompass Him and are too confined for Him, but He is encompassed by this heart in the constitution of the believing human. What is meant here by 'encompassing' is knowledge of God.” Here Ibn Arabi is of course referring to the famous quote which some people wrongly attribute as hadith Qudsi (the words of God upon the tongue of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), *“Neither My heavens nor My Earth encompasses Me – but the heart of My believing servant does encompass Me.”*[91,92]

Sharif al Jhurjani رحمه الله was from Persia (1339–1414) describes Qalb as the luminous jewel addressed by God, held responsible for their actions, punished and rewarded. [93]

Imam Rabbani Alfi Thani رحمه الله (1564–1624) an Indian origin scholar of the stature of ‘mujadid’ mentions in his ‘maktoobat’ that the human being is a miniaturized summary of this realm. In this regard, an example of everything in this world is present in the human being. For instance, the counterpart of the Supreme Throne in the human being is the ‘heart’. Just as there is an intermediate realm between this world and the world of command, the heart in the same way is an intermediate realm between this world and the world of command. The heart and the Supreme Throne therefore, despite being considered part of the world of creation with respect to their corporeality, are accepted to be from the world of command in terms of their other aspects. However, coming to a realization of the essence of these kinds of

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jewels, according to the Sufis, is a situation unique to saints (awliya) who have rightfully completed their suluk or spiritual initiation. [84]

Shah Wali-Ullah Muhaddith Delhvi (1703–1762) an Indian origin scholar of worldwide fame says , “Qalb is that thing by which man loves and hates.” This means according to Shah Sahib, Qalb is the seat of love and hatred.

Types of heart (Qalb)

Holy Qur'an says,

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ

اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكُمُ اللَّهُ أَيْنَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ

لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before you without Shaytan insinuating something into his recitation while he was reciting. But Allah revokes whatever Shaytan insinuates and Allah confirms His Signs, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. That He may make what Shaytan insinuates a trial for those in whose heart is a disease and whose hearts are hardened. Indeed the wrongdoers are entrenched in hostility. And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it [the Qur'an] is the truth from your Lord, that they may believe therein and their hearts may submit to it with humility. Indeed Allah is the Guide of those

who believe, to the Straight Path. (22:52- 54)

In these three verses, Allah, ﷻ has mentioned two types of hearts put to trial and one type that is ‘victorious’. The two types of heart that are put to trial are the ‘diseased’ and the ‘harsh’ heart. The victorious heart is the heart of the believer that is humble before its Lord; it is at rest and satisfied with Him, submissive and obedient to Him. It is desired of the heart and other limbs that they be healthy and sound, having no defect, so that they can do that which agrees to their nature and fulfil the purpose for which they were created. The hearts stepping outside the bounds of steadfastness in obedience (istiqamah) could either be due to its dryness and harshness or the absence of doing that which is desired of it. In this respect it is like a mute tongue or an eye that cannot see, or see only partially, due to some form of illness or defect. Therefore, the hearts have been classified into three types:

- The healthy and sound heart which contains no impediment preventing it from accepting the truth, loving it, and giving it preference other than its coming to know of it. Therefore, its comprehension of the truth is correct and it accepts it with complete submission.
- The dead, harsh and dry heart that does not accept the truth nor submit to it.
- The diseased heart, when its disease predominates, it joins the ranks of the dead and harsh heart; but if its soundness predominates, it joins the ranks of the truthful and sound heart. (Marif-ul-Qur’an)

Therefore, the first type of heart is the living, humble, soft, attentive and heedful heart. The second type is the

brittle, dry, and dead heart. The third type is the diseased heart, either it is closer to its salvation or it is closer to its devastation

Hafiz Ibn Qayim رحمہ اللہ has categorized the hearts into three types :

The Correct and Sound Heart

This is the truthful and sound (saleem) heart. It is the only type of heart that a person can bring to Allah on the Day of Judgement which will rescue him.

Allah ﷻ says:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.” (26: 88-89)

The meaning of ‘saleem’ is one which is secure from all that what Allah ﷻ dislikes. This verse has declared that wealth and children will not be of any help to a person on the Day of Judgment. This declaration is subjected to exception in the words, ‘except to one who will come to Allah with sound heart.’ (coming with sound heart means to come to Him with true faith). Now, this exception has been interpreted in two different ways. According to one interpretation adopted by some commentators this exception is not meant to exclude the believers from the rule. It is an exception of a special type which is known in Arabic grammar as ‘munqati’ (This type of exception does not exclude anything from the aforementioned statement. It simply says that the thing negated in the first sentence is

found in someone else.) A simple example for this expression is that a person is asked about Zaid whether he has some wealth and children, and he replies, “No, his wealth and children are nothing but his sound heart.” The same expression is used in this verse. The gist of the verse, according to this interpretation, would be that wealth and children will not be helpful to anyone, neither to a believer nor to a disbeliever; what will be helpful, instead of wealth and children, is one's sound heart, i.e. the true faith and righteous deeds. The second interpretation, adopted by the majority, is that it is a normal exception which means that wealth and children may be helpful to the one who will come to Allah ﷻ with sound heart, i.e. with faith and righteous deeds, but these things will not be of any use to a disbeliever. It may also be noted that ‘sound heart’ literally means a healthy heart. But according to Ibn Abbas ؓ here it means the heart of a believer that testifies the Oneness of Allah and is pure from shirk. The same interpretation is reported from Mujahid, Hasan al-Basari and Sayid ibn al-Musayyab ؓ with different expressions. Sayid ibn al-Musayyab ؓ says that the sound heart is only that of a believer because the heart of a disbeliever is sick. (Maarif ul Qur'an).

In another verse Allah ﷻ says:

إِذْ جَاءَ رَبَّهُ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

When he came to his Lord with a pure heart (attached to Allah Alone and none else, worshipping none but Allah Alone [true Islamic Monotheism] pure from the filth of polytheism).

(37 :84)

Here, ‘coming to his Lord’ means to turn to Allah, to

zero in one's attention towards Him and to worship Him'. By placing the restriction of 'with a pure heart' it has been indicated that no act of devotion (ibadah) to Allah ﷻ is acceptable until the heart of the devotee is cleansed pure from false beliefs and ill intentions. If a certain act of devotion is performed while laced with some false belief, then, no matter how hard the devotee has worked in this process, it will still not be acceptable. Similarly, if the main purpose of the devotee happens not to be the seeking of the sole pleasure of Allah ﷻ but is a simple show off or some material gain then that act of devotion is not praiseworthy.

Signs of sound heart are as follows:

- Secure from every carnal desire that opposes the order and prohibition of Allah ﷻ.
- Secure from every doubt and uncertainty that would obscure or go against His narrative.
- Secure from displaying servitude to any other than Him; just as it is secure from seeking ruling from any other than His Messenger ﷺ. Therefore it becomes sound through loving Allah ﷻ and seeking the ruling of His Messenger ﷺ; It becomes sound through showing Him fear, hope, trust and reliance, penitence and humility; It prefers what pleases Him in every circumstance and distances itself from everything that would displease Him in every possible way. This is the reality of servitude which can only be directed to Allah ﷻ Alone.
- Secure from committing any form of shirk, whatsoever, and all deeds are purely for Allah ﷻ. Hence if it loves, it loves for the sake of Allah; if it hates, it hates for the sake

of Allah ﷻ; if it gives, it gives for the sake of Allah ﷻ ;
and if it withholds, it withholds for the sake of Allah ﷻ .

The lofty blessing of Sound heart is a divine gift from Allah ﷻ to his blessed servants who have made Him as the pivot of all their activities. Holy Qur'an says

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَمْشُرْ حَ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا

حَرَجًا كَأْتَمَّا يَضَعُدُّ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

So whoever Allah wants to guide - He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He wants to misguide - He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allah place defilement upon those who do not believe. [6:125]

Hakim رحمه in al-Mustadrak and Baihaqi رحمه report from Abdullah ibn Masud ؓ that when this verse was revealed, the Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ requested him to explain the meaning of ‘Sharh al-Sadr’ the opening of the heart for Islam. He said, “Allah Ta`ala puts a light in the heart of a believer through which his heart opens up for the perception, understanding and acceptance of truth.” The companions submitted, “Is there a sign which will help recognize the person who has such Sharh al-Sadr?” He said, “Yes. The sign is that ‘Akhirah’(hereafter) and its blessings become the object of all his desires. He avoids uncalled-for desires and fleeting enjoyments and starts getting ready for death before it comes.” After that, he said, “And whom He wills to let go astray, He makes his heart narrow, too much narrow [wherefore, for him to accept the truth and to act in accordance with it becomes as difficult], as though he climbs up to the sky”. The narrowing of his heart means that no

passage for the entry of truth and good remains open there. A similar explanation has also been reported from Abdullah Ibn Abbas ؓ who said, “When tight heart hears the Dhikr of Allah, he feels being harassed and when he listens to what is Kufr and Shirk, his heart relishes it.” This was the reason why the noble Sahabah, may Allah ﷻ be pleased with all of them, were chosen by Allah ﷻ to be His Prophet's companions in faith, and to be the learners and carriers of his teachings as his direct disciples. They were so convinced as his adherents that they hardly had any doubts about Islamic injunctions . During their whole lifetime, the number of questions presented before the Holy Prophet ﷺ by them are but a counted few. The reason was that, by the grace of the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, their hearts were almost engraved with love and reverence for Allah ﷻ and because of which they were blessed with the high station of Sharh al-Sadr, a heart open to the acceptance of truth. In fact, their hearts had become in themselves the very standard of truth and falsehood. They would accept truth promptly and falsehood could not find entry into their hearts. After that, as the distance from the blessed period of the Holy Prophet ﷺ increased, doubts started finding room for infiltration and that was the beginning of dogmatic differences. In our day, the world is a stage infested with doubts. People seek solutions through debates, arguments and counter-arguments and end up with confusions worse confounded. This is not a sound way to handle doubts as pointed out by the unique Indian poet, Akbar Ilahabadi:

*The philosopher deep in debate cannot find God
He is untangling the string but cannot find where to begin!*

There is only one way out, that which was taken by the blessed Companions and by the early righteous elders

Think of the perfect power of Allah ﷻ and imagine His blessings and feel the presence of His love and reverence, the doubts evaporate automatically. (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

The Dead Heart : A heart that contains no life.

About this holy Qur'an says,

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

In their hearts there is a malady, so Allah has made them grow in their malady. [2:10]

Now, illness or disease, in the general medical sense, is a state in which a man has lost the balanced proportion of the elements within him necessary to keep him healthy, so that his body can no longer function properly, which may finally lead to his total destruction. In the terminology of the Holy Qur'an and the hadiths the word 'disease' is also applied to certain mental or psychic states (we are using the two terms in the original and more comprehensive sense) which hinder man of the ability to perform good deeds, and even of ordinary human decency, till he meets with his death, and bars him from attaining any degree of spiritual perfection, for they (diseases) gradually deprive him his spiritual death. The great spiritual master, Junaid ؒ of Baghdad, has said that just as the diseases of the body arise from an imbalance among the four humors, the diseases of the heart arise from a surrender to one's physical desires. According to the present verse, the disease hidden in their hearts is unbelief and

rejection of the truth, which is as much a physical sickness as a spiritual one. It is all too obvious that being ungrateful to one's Creator and Nourisher and going against His commandments is to be spiritually sick. Moreover, to keep this disbelief concealed for the sake of petty worldly gains and not to have the courage to speak out one's mind is no less a disease of the soul. Hypocrisy is a physical disease too in so far as the hypocrite is always shuddering for fear of being exposed. Jealousy being a necessary ingredient of hypocrisy, he cannot bear to see the Muslims growing stronger in the world, and yet the poor hypocrite cannot even have the satisfaction of unburdening his heart of the venom. No wonder that all this tension should express itself in physical ailment. As for Allahﷻ making them grow in their malady, it means that they are jealous of the growing strength of the Muslims, but it is Allah's will to make the position of the Muslims even stronger, as they can see for themselves, which leads to increase in the growth of their illness (Ma'ariful Qu'ran).

Signs of dead heart:

- It does not know its Lord and it does not worship Him by complying to His command and doing that what He loves and is pleased with. Instead it is a slave to its carnal desires, temptations and pleasures. It is indifferent to whether they lead to the displeasure of its Lord and His anger or not.
- It directs its love, hope, pleasure, displeasure, glorification, and submission to other than Him. If it loves, it loves for the sake of its base desires; If it hates, it

hates for the sake of its base desires; If it gives, it gives for the sake of its base desires; If it withholds, it withholds for the sake of its base desires. It gives preference to its base desires and these are more beloved to it than the pleasure of its Master.

- Mixing with the person who has this heart is a sickness, interacting with him is poison and sitting with him is destruction.

The Diseased Heart

This is the heart that contains life but also possesses a defect.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النِّبِيُّ لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ اِنْ اَتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي

قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا

O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah , then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech [33:32]

Signs of diseased heart

The diseased heart has two impulses calling it:

- One leading it to life and the other leading it to death; and it follows whichever of the two predominates. It is constantly being tried by two callers: one calling it to Allah ﷻ, His Messenger, and the Abode of the Hereafter; and the other calling it to temporal, worldly matters. It responds to the one that is closest and most influential at the time.

It contains love of Allah ﷻ, faith in Him, sincerity to Him, and trust and reliance upon him in all those matters that are essential to its life. It also contains the love of its carnal desires, giving preference to them, and eagerness to attain them. It contains jealousy, arrogance, self-amazement, and love of ranking through attaining leadership: those matters that necessarily lead to its destruction and ruin. When its disease predominates, it joins the ranks of the dead and harsh heart; but if its soundness predominates, it joins the ranks of the truthful and sound heart.

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) divided the hearts into following categories as is authentically reported from Hudhayfah bin al-Yaman ؓ.

Illuminated heart

The heart that has exclusively been illuminated by a blazing torch and that is the heart of the believer. A heart that has detached itself of everything besides Allah ﷻ and His Messenger. Therefore, it has separated and secured itself from everything save the truth. The meaning of his saying, 'illuminated by a blazing torch' refers to the niche of faith. He indicated by his words, 'a blazing torch' that it was set ablaze and illuminated by the light of knowledge and faith.

Encased heart

The heart that is encased and that is the heart of the disbeliever. The 'encased heart' refers to the heart of the disbeliever because it is wrapped by a veil and covering and hence the light of knowledge and faith cannot reach it.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

And they said, "Our hearts are wrapped." But, [in fact], Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, so little is it that they believe. [2:88]

The Jews used to say sarcastically that their hearts were ‘veiled’, by which they meant that their hearts were so well protected against Islam that it could never touch them. This was their way of congratulating themselves on being staunch in their belief. The Holy Qur'an points out that this is not the firmness of faith, but a damnation, for they deny Islam which now is the true religion and stick to a religion which has been abrogated. They, consequently, possess only ‘a little faith’. Since a little faith is not acceptable, they turn out to be infidels. ‘The little faith’ which they possessed pertained to the doctrines which are common to Islam and Judaism - for example, belief in Allah ﷻ, or belief in the Day of Judgment. But they did not accept Sayyiduna Muhammad ﷺ as a Prophet and the Holy Qur'an as the Word of Allah ﷻ. So, their faith was not complete. If the verse describes ‘the little faith’ as ‘iman’ it does so only in the lexical sense, for iman signifies total certitude, even if it pertains to certain things, and not to others. But from the point of view of the shariah, such a partial faith cannot be described as iman. The shariah would accept, as valid, only that iman which affirms with certitude each and everything that the Shariah requires one to affirm. [Ma'ariful Qur'an]

This veil is the covering that Allah ﷻ has placed on their hearts by way of punishment for their rejecting the truth and being too arrogant to accept it. Therefore, it is a covering upon the hearts, a seal for the ears, and blindness for the

eyes.

وَإِذَا قُرَأَتِ الْقُرْآنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا
وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِذَا ذُكِّرَتْ رَبِّكَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ
وَحَدَّاهُ وَلَوْ أَعْلَى آدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُورًا

And when you recite the Qur'an, We place an invisible curtain between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter. [45] And We put covers on their hearts, so that they do not understand it, and deafness in their ears. And when you refer to your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in version.[17:45-46]

Inverted heart

The heart that is inverted is the heart of the hypocrite. In holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) says:

فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَتَيْنِ وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا

What is [the matter] with you [that you are] two groups concerning the hypocrites, while has made them fall back [into error and disbelief] for what they earned. Do you wish to guide those whom Allah has sent astray? And he whom Allah sends astray - never will you find for him a way [of guidance] (4:88)

This is the most evil of hearts and the vilest of them for it believes falsehood to be the truth and shows love and allegiance.[95,96]

Poisons of heart

Hafiz Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته says, “All acts of disobedience are poisons to the heart and cause its sickness and ruin”. [19]

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً
نُكِتَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْثَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ وَتَابَ سُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ وَإِنْ عَادَ زِيدَ
فِيهَا حَتَّى تَغْلُو قَلْبُهُ وَهُوَ الرِّانُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
يَكْسِبُونَ

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Verily, when the servant commits a sin, a black mark appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah has mentioned: No, rather a covering is over their hearts from what they have earned.” (83:14)
(Tirmidhi3334)

They result in its will running, off course, against that of Allah ﷻ, and so its sickness festers and increases. Whoever is concerned with the health and life of his heart, must rid it of the effects of such poisons, and then protect it by avoiding new ones. If he consumes any poison (sin) by mistake, then he should hasten to wipe out their effect by turning in repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah ﷻ, as well as by doing good deeds that will wipe out his wrong actions. But by thinking that one will repent he should not fall into the trap of Shaitan that sins are not a problem as Allah ﷻ always accepts ‘tauba’(repentance) . Tauba is just like an antidote for sins and sin, which is a poison for the heart, will

damage the heart even if one repents and that is accepted. Some damage is inevitable. Though the poisons are numerous, Ibn Qayim رحمته الله mentions common four of them as main —unnecessary talking, unrestrained glances, eating too much food and keeping bad company. Of all the poisons, these are the most widespread and have the greatest effect on a heart's well-being.

Unnecessary talking

Anas رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said,
“The faith of a servant is not put right until his heart is put right, and his heart is not put right until his tongue is put right.” (Musnad)

This shows that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has made the purification of faith conditional on the purification of the heart, and the purification of the heart conditional on the purification of the tongue. At-Tirmidhi relates in a hadith on the authority of Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تُكْثِرُوا الْكَلَامَ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ كَثْرَةَ الْكَلَامِ بِغَيْرِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ قَسْوَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ وَإِنْ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسُ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْقَلْبَ الْقَاسِي
“Do not talk excessively without remembering Allah, because such excessive talk without the mention of Allah causes the heart to harden, and the person furthest from Allah is a person with a hard heart.” (Tirmidhi 1518)

Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه said, “A person who talks too much is a person who often makes mistakes, and someone who often makes mistakes, often has wrong actions. The Fire has a priority over such a frequent sinner.” [Ibn Habban]

Mu adh رضي الله عنه narrated that Messenger of Allah held his

tongue between his fingers, and then he said, “Restrain this.” I said, “O Prophet of Allah, are we accountable for what we say?” He said, “May your mother be bereft by your loss! (used as a phrase) Is there anything more than the harvest of the tongues that throws people on their faces (or he said “on their noses”) into the Fire?” [Tirmidhi 3973]

What is meant here by ‘the harvest of the tongues’ is the punishment for saying forbidden things. A man, through his actions and words, sows the seeds of either good or evil. On the Day of Resurrection he harvests their fruits. Those who sow the seeds of good words and deeds harvest honour and blessings; those who sow the seeds of evil words and deeds reap only regret and remorse.

It has been related on the authority of Sahl Ibn Saad رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ يَضْمَنُ لِي مَا بَيْنَ لَحْيَيْهِ، وَمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ أَضْمَنَ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ

“Whoever can guarantee what is between his jaws and what is between his legs, I guarantee him the Garden.” [Bukhari]

It has also been related by Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ

الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَضْمُتْ

“Let whoever believes in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day either speak good or remain silent.”

(Bukhari 5672)

عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْثَقَفِيِّ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ حَدِّثْنِي بِأَمْرٍ أَعْتَصِمُ

بِهِ، قَالَ: قُلْ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ، قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَخَوْفُ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَى فَأَخَذَ

بِلِسَانِ نَفْسِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: هَذَا،

Sufyan bin Abdullah Ath-Thaqafi رضي الله عنه said, “O Messenger of Allah! Inform me about a matter that I may hold fast to. He said: 'Say: My Lord is Allah, then be steadfast.' I said: O Messenger of Allah! What do you fear most for me? So he took hold of his tongue and said: 'This.'”

Unrestrained glances

The unrestrained glance results in getting attracted to what one sees, and hence the image of what he sees gets fixed in heart. This can result in several kinds of corruption in the heart of the servant. The following are a some of them:

عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ نَظَرِ الْفُجَاءَةِ

فَأَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَصْرِفَ بَصَرِي

Jarir Bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه reported, “I asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ about the sudden glance (that is cast) on the face (of a non-Mahram). He commanded me that I should turn away my eyes.” (Muslim 2159a)

It has been related that the Prophet ﷺ once said words to the effect,

“The glance is a poisoned arrow of Shaytan. Whoever lowers his gaze for Allah, He will bestow upon him a refreshing sweetness which he will find in his heart on the day that he meets Him.” [Ahmad, Tabarani]

عَنْ بُرَيْدَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا تُتْبِعِ النَّظْرَةَ النَّظْرَةَ فَإِنَّ لَكَ

الْأُولَى وَلَيْسَتْ لَكَ الْآخِرَةُ

Buraydah رضي الله عنه reported: *The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not follow one glance at a woman with another. Verily, you have the first one (one will not be questioned for it as it is unintentional) and not the second.”*

(Tirmidhi 2777)

Shaytan enters with the glance, for he travels with it, faster than the wind blowing through an empty place. He makes what is seen appear more beautiful than it really is, and transforms it into an idol for the heart to worship. Then he promises it false rewards, lights the fire of desires within it, and fuels it with the wood of forbidden actions, which the servant would not have committed had it not been for this distorted image. This distracts the heart and makes it forget its more important concerns. It stands between it and them; and so the heart loses its straight path and falls into the pit of desire and ignorance. Allah ﷻ says:

وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطَا

And do not obey anyone whose heart We have made forgetful in remembering Us – who follows his own desires, and whose affair has exceeded all bounds. (18:28)

The unrestrained gaze causes all three afflictions.

1) It has been said that between the eye and the heart is an immediate connection; if the eyes are corrupted, then the heart follows. It becomes like a rubbish heap where all the dirt and filth and rottenness collect, and so there is no room for love for Allah ﷻ, awareness of being in His presence, and feeling joy at His proximity. Only the opposite of these things can inhabit such a heart. Staring and gazing without restraint is disobedience to Allah ﷻ:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ

Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that is more purifying for them. Surely Allah is aware of what they do.” (24:30)

2) Furthermore, by letting the gaze roam free, the heart is covered with darkness, just as lowering the gaze for Allah ﷻ adores it with light. After the above verse, Allah ﷻ says in the same Surah of the Qur'an:

“Allah is the light of the heavens and the Earth: the likeness of His light is as if there were a niche, and in the niche is a lamp, and in the lamp is a glass, and the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it. Light upon light. Allah guides whomever He wants to His Light. Allah strikes metaphors for man; and Allah knows all things.” (24:35)

When the heart is a light, countless good comes to it from all directions. If it is dark, then clouds of evil and afflictions come from all directions to cover it up.

3) Letting the gaze run loose also makes the heart blind to distinguishing between truth and falsehood, between the Sunnah and innovation; while lowering it for Allah ﷻ, gives it a penetrating, true and distinguishing insight.

Too Much Food

The consumption of small amounts of food guarantees tenderness of the heart, strength of the intellect, humility of the self, weakness of desires, and gentleness of temperament. Immoderate eating brings about the opposite of these praiseworthy qualities.

مَا مَلَأَ آدَمُ وَعَاءً شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنٍ حَسْبُ الْآدَمِيِّ لُقَيْمَاتٌ يُقْنَعْنَ صَلْبُهُ فَإِنْ غَلَبَتْ الْآدَمِيُّ
نَفْسُهُ فُلْتُكَ لِلظَّعَامِ وَتُلْتُكَ لِلشَّرَابِ وَتُلْتُكَ لِلنَّفْسِ

The son of Adam fills no vessel more displeasing to Allah than his stomach. A few morsels should be enough for him to preserve his strength. If he must fill it, then he should allow a third for his food, a third for his drink and leave a third empty for easy breathing.” (Ibn Maja 3349)

It has been reported that when a group of young men from the Tribe of Israel were worshipping, and it was time for them to break their fast, a man stood up and said, “Do not eat too much, otherwise you will drink too much, and then you will end up sleeping too much, and then you will lose too much.”

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ مَا شَبِعَ آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنْذُ قَدِمُوا الْمَدِينَةَ ثَلَاثَ
لَيَالٍ تَبَاعًا مِنْ خُبْزٍ بَرٍّ حَتَّى تُوَفِّيَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Aisha ؓ said, “From the time of their arrival in Madina up until his death, the family of Muhammad never ate their fill of bread made from wheat three nights in a row.” [Bukhari 3344]

Ibrahim bin Adham ؓ said, “Any one who controls his stomach is in control of his deen, and anyone who controls his hunger is in control of good behavior. Disobedience towards Allah ﷻ is nearest to a person who is satiated with a full stomach, and furthest away from a person who is hungry.”

Keeping bad company

Unnecessary companionship is a chronic disease that

causes much harm. How often have the wrong kind of companionship and intermixing deprived people of Allah's generosity, planting discord in their hearts which even the passage of time-even if it were long enough for mountains to be worn away-has been unable to dispel. In keeping such company one can find the roots of loss, both in this life and in the next life.

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا مِثْلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ وَالْجَلِيسِ
السَّوِّءِ كَمِثْلِ الْمِسْكِ وَنَافِخِ الْكِبْرِ فَتَحَامِلُ الْمِسْكِ إِمَّا أَنْ يُحْدِثَكَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَبْتَاعَ مِنْهُ
وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْهُ رِيحًا طَيِّبَةً وَنَافِخِ الْكِبْرِ إِمَّا أَنْ يُحْرِقَ ثِيَابَكَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ رِيحًا خَبِيثَةً

Abu Musa رضي الله عنه reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying,
“*The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one (iron-smith) blowing bellows, and the owner of musk would either offer you free of charge or you would buy it from him or you would smell its pleasant odour, and so far as one who blows the bellows is concerned, he would either burn your clothes or you shall have to smell its repugnant smell.*”

A servant should benefit from companionship. In order to do so he should divide people into four categories, and be careful not to get them mixed up, for once one of them is mixed with another, then evil can find its way through to him:

The first category are those people whose company is like food: These are the people with knowledge of Allah ﷻ, of His commands, of the scheming of His enemies, and of the diseases of the heart and their remedies – who wish well for Allah ﷻ, His Prophet ﷺ and His servants. Associating with

this type of person is an achievement in itself.

The second category are those people whose company is like a medicine. They are only required when a disease sets in. When you are healthy, you have no need of them. However, mixing with them is sometimes necessary for your livelihood, businesses, consultation and the like. Once what you need from them has been fulfilled, mixing with them should be avoided.

The third category are those people whose company is harmful. Mixing with this type of person is like a disease, in all its variety and degrees and strengths and weaknesses. Associating with one or some of them is like an incurable chronic disease. You will never profit either in this life or in the next life if you have them for company, and you will surely lose either one or both of your deen and your livelihood because of them. If their companionship has taken hold of you and is established, then it becomes a fatal, terrifying sickness. Amongst such people are those who neither speak any good that might benefit you, nor listen closely to you so that they might benefit from you.

The fourth category are those people whose company is doom itself. It is like taking poison, its victim either finds an antidote or perishes. Many people belong to this category. They are the people of religious innovation and misguidance, those who abandon the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and advocate other beliefs. They present Sunnah as a bidah and vice-versa. A man with any intellect should not sit in their assemblies nor mix with them. The result of doing so will either be the death of his heart or, at the very best, its falling seriously ill.

Strengthening the heart

The well-being of the servant's heart, however, is far more important than that of his body, for while the wellbeing of his body enables him to lead a life that is free from illnesses in this world, that of the heart ensures him both a fortunate life in this world and eternal bliss in the next. In the same way, while the death of the body cuts the servant off from this world, the death of the heart results in everlasting anguish. A righteous man once said, "How odd, that some people mourn for the one whose body has died, but never mourn for the one whose heart has died and yet the death of the heart is far more serious!"

Thus, acts of obedience are indispensable to the wellbeing of the heart. It is worthwhile mentioning the following acts of obedience here, since they are very necessary and essential for the servant's heart: [89,94,96]

Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah ﷻ)

Recitation of the holy Qur'an

Seeking forgiveness from Allah ﷻ

Making Dua (supplication)

Invoking blessings and peace on Holy Prophet ﷺ

Praying at night

Remembrance of Death

Following of the Sunnah (Tradition) of Rasulullah ﷺ

To have the noble company and the guidance of saints (whose hearts are receiving-stations of the Divine Light).

Aql (Intellect)

Aql- عقل is an Arabic word having various meanings like, ‘mind’, ‘intellect’ or ‘the rational faculty of the soul or mind’. Various scholars have discussed its meanings as:

Al-Anbari, a famous Arabic Language Scholar said , “Intelligent - العاقل sane or wise person is the one who fastened upon his ideas and actions after careful excogitation.”

Thaalabi has further elaborated this meaning, stating that the synonym of al-Aql is المنع (al-Manah), meaning the act of preventing, with-holding or restraining something (from one’s saying: ’عقلت الناقة’ when she restrained the she-camel.) Al-Aqil therefore is the one who with-holds or retrains himself from doing that which is not suitable and befitting.

Imam Ahmad رحمه الله and *al-Muhasibi* رحمه الله described al-Aql as innate property of man or an inborn light - نور by which one is prepared to perceive things and by which one restrains his own self from his heart’s vain desires. [97]

Shahabuddin Suhrawardi رحمه الله stated Aql is a natural light, by which one can distinguish good from evil. The aql is of two types:

- (1) One in respect of the Creator. Its meaning is the ‘aql of guidance’ special to the faithful.
- (2) One in respect of the created. Its meaning is the ‘aql of livelihood.’

For people of faith and for seekers of God and of the next world, 'the 'aql of livelihood' is obedient to 'the 'aql of guidance'. Thus, to the seekers of God, the man of this world would call them as having weak 'aql'. He knows not that outside their 'aql' is another 'aql'. [98]

Al Farabi classified human intellect into three stages, which are Aql bil-Quwwa (potential intellect), Aql bil-Fi'l (actual intellect) and Aql al-Mustafad (the acquired intellect).

Aql bil-Quwwa is the natural disposition of thought, occurring when the mind shows the ability of abstracting intelligible objects.

Aql bil-Fi'l stage is progressed as one grows in experience by fully grasping the intelligible objects.

Aql al-Mustafad stage is reached when the intelligible objects become actualized in the mind with the aid of the Aql al-Fa'il (the active or agent intellect).

Sayid Hussein Nasr says that the distinction between reason and intellect is largely forgotten by the speakers of the western languages. He further notes that in Arabic, "A single term, al- aql, is used to denote both reason and intellect, but, the faculty of reasoning is considered to be dependent on the higher domain of the intellect." Nasr sheds further light on the Islamic idea of the act of intellection and states, "Al- 'aql in Arabic means basically to bind. It is that faculty which binds man to God, to his Origin. By virtue of being endowed with 'al-aql', man becomes man and shares in the attribute of knowledge, 'al-ilm', which ultimately belongs to God alone." He further asserts that there is a tendency in the western languages to equate 'aql'(intellect) with reason. Once human reasoning is tied in the relationship with divine knowledge, it

enhances its state of intelligence. This contingency of human reasoning upon the aql, or intellect, aids man to reach the full potential and the best of the creation (ashraf-al-makhlooqaat). This differentiation between reason and intellect shows the intellectual ascension from human intelligence to the Divine knowledge. In essence, ‘Aql’ or human intellect has the potential to understand the unlimited truth of God, provided this gift of reasoning is deepened and enhanced by the divine knowledge present in revelations and the signs present in the creation. [99]

It is one of the basic entities by which a human being can be distinguished from animals. Otherwise the basic organs and organs of sensation are the same. Even animals have some basic intelligence by which they gratify their desires and needs but the level of intellect needed to differentiate the good from bad is only unique in humans. So in other words if a human being does not take care of his intellect he can fall into the category of animals and in some instances even below. In holy Qur’an there are many verses which make reference to the intellect (aql) and it is mostly used in verb form ‘Taqilun, aqalu, and Yaqilun’, in which intellect is mentioned in the context of an action. In many verses it is used as ‘Fahm’. Amongst all the religions it is the Islam which ignites the passion to ponder upon the universe, analyze it and reach the divine reality behind the universe. This ability is based on one’s intellect and Allah ﷻ says,

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا

مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ

"The creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of day and night, and the ships which run in the sea with that which profits man and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all kinds of animals, and the changing of the winds, and the clouds made subservient between heavens and earth, these are surely signs for a people who think (yaqilun)" [2:164]

It is the intellect of man, according to the Qur'an, which gives him superiority over the angels:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ
قَالَ يَادُمْ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنَّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise." He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed. (2:31-33)

Through the intellect man is able to draw conclusions

from his observations of the bounties of God and consequently learns to appreciate Him as the One Creator of the entire universe and to show gratitude through obedience to Him. Scholars differ, however, with respect to the level of the intellect's perception. Whilst some scholars limit the intellect's capacity for reason and rational perception, others believe that the intellect is also capable of spiritual perception, direct and immediate perception of God. But for this function the intellect must be illuminated with the faith otherwise it will not be able to reach its maximum capabilities. All scholars agree upon the intellect's ability for rational cognition which God has endowed man with for the purpose of actualizing God's will on Earth i.e, becoming vicegerent on Earth (khalifa).

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you might use reason (intellect). (2:242)

In another verse, Allah declares that he reveals in the sacred language of Arabic, so as to better enable humans to use their intellect in understanding His guidance:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

“Indeed, we sent it down as a Qur'an in Arabic, so that you may use your intellect” (12:2).

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ

Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? Rather, they are just like cattle. (25: 44)

In this verse mention is made of the people who do not use their intellect to recognize prophets and just refute

them and due to this they have been compared to cattle. The reason being the cattle just go to fulfil their desires and spend whole of their time after created things without pondering about the creator.

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

And they will say, "If only we had been listening or reasoning, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze." (67: 10)

In holy Qur'an man is being constantly advised by Allah ﷻ that he should use his intellect for the salvation and even reprimanded for not doing so. In above verse we see the dwellers of hell attribute their pitiful state to not using their intellectual capabilities which would have promoted them for doing deeds of salvation.

ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ..

... there are certainly signs for a people who understand.
(16: 12)

In the preceding verses Allah ﷻ points out to Divine blessings and mentions the creation of the universe with unprecedented wisdom. In them, those who ponder, find significant indicators and proofs which lead them to perceive the truth of 'Tauhid', the truth that Allah ﷻ is One. Therefore, while these blessings are being mentioned, they are tied up with a notice to pay attention, think, understand and accept the advice. (Marif-u-Qur'an)

There is divergence of opinions between scholars of Islam concerning the anatomical seat of intellect. Imam Abu Hanifah رحمته الله and his school consider brain to be the organ of intellect. This is also one of the narrated opinion of Imam

Ahmad bin Hanmbal رحمہ اللہ, although many scholars of Hanmbali school of jurisprudence consider those functions to be centrally in the heart instead. If we analyze it closely then there is not much contradiction, brain no doubt is the seat of thinking but for all its functioning it needs constant blood supply and that is provided by the heart hence both are closely bound together. If heart stops beating then the capability to think stops abruptly in a matter of seconds and if the heart beating is not restored in a couple of minutes, then the ability to think may be lost forever due to extensive brain damage.

As per the principles of Islamic jurisprudence the intellect (aql) is what makes a person responsible for following shariah rulings (mukallaf). In the absence of intellect, a person is absolved of the Islamic responsibilities. If the individual is mentally sane then he is liable for punishment if he commits a grave wrong. On the other hand, if an individual loses his senses, he becomes absolved of all responsibility in terms of the Shariah. [99,100] This we see in the following hadith:

The Prophet ﷺ was asked concerning Malik al Aslami رحمہ اللہ who came to confess to the Prophet ﷺ that he had committed adultery. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Do you know whether his mind is impaired, of any fact which may discredit his confession?” So it was answered’ “All we know of him is that he has a sound and a trustworthy mind”. (Muslim).

The constant input of aql to heart enables the latter to be in the constant pursuit of excellence and salvation. In order to become ‘Qalb-e- Saleem’ or ‘Nafs-e- mutmainnah’, one needs knowledge which is provided by the aql empowered by the divine revelation.

Man –The Perfect Creation

In order to summarize all our previous discourses on the faculties in man we can say that the man is composed of two realities, external and internal. External reality is the body, although many people desist from calling body a reality but no sensible person can refuse the existence of body howsoever short its tenure may be. The inner faculty is the actual virtue, which is the reality in the true sense of term. In holy Qur'an, we see that when a discourse started between Allah ﷻ and the angels about the creation of man, Allah ﷻ says,

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا
وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels, "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said, "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?"

He said, "I know what you know not." (2:30)

The angels raised a concern about the bad qualities which they could perceive in man, than Allah ﷻ negated their argument by mentioning one virtue of man which He had kept in him i.e., knowledge.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

صَادِقِينَ

And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; Then He said, "Tell me the names of those if you are right" (2:31)

قَالُوا سُبْحَنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

They said, "Glory be to you! We have no knowledge but that which You have taught us; surely You are the Knowing, the Wise." (2:32)

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

He said, "O Adam! Inform them of their names." Then when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not say to you that I surely know what is hidden (ghayb) in the heavens and the earth and (that) I know what you manifest and what you hide?" (2:33)

Therefore, man is superior by knowledge and intellect and both these features are his inner attributes because of which he has been made the viceroy of Allah ﷻ on earth and everyone other than him is bereft of this great bounty from the creator. Until the creation of man, everything in the universe was either matter (like all the celestial bodies, flora and fauna), or spiritual (like angels). Nevertheless, the man became the first creation who was hybrid between matter (body) and spirituality (soul) and this marked the beginning of the wonder creation of man. The lofty status of man made angels envious of him as they had an impression that there is

nobody in universe who is superior to them. However, in divine plan an entity called ‘man’ had to come into existence who would be crowned with divine vicegerency. The angels despite being extremely obedient raised the issue of some of the bad attributes of man and out of curiosity enquired from Allah ﷻ about His will to make man as a viceroy. In order to exemplify His decision Adam ﷺ was first endowed with a special aptitude for knowledge, which angels did not have.

Then he was given a special knowledge about the names and attributes of all the things and by default, angels could not have any of these, like absence of knowledge of the feelings of thirst, hunger, sorrow, pain, passion and so on. Adam ﷺ was asked to tell the angels the names of all these things hence former became the teacher of the latter and hence establishing the superiority of Adam ﷺ over angels. The angels could not understand that just being free of all the vices alone is not the criterion for becoming viceroy on the earth and it needs much more, which was present in Adam. There are two presumptions in this event about the knowledge provided to Adam ﷺ, either the knowledge was provided in the private capacity to Adam ﷺ in the absence of angels and other is that both the parties were given the same information but Adam ﷺ could comprehend it while angels could not do so. Qazi Thanullah Panipati ر.ه. is of the opinion that the knowledge mentioned here pertains to the names and attributes of Allah ﷻ.

When Allah ﷻ desired to create man, He chose the best form, which He could think and that is his own image. This concept of ‘own image’ is an extremely ambiguous topic on which numerous treatises have been written. The mention of

this is seen in a few hadiths.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ

Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah created Adam in His image---” (Bukhari-6227)

In another hadith, Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا قَاتَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَخَاهُ

فَلْيَجْتَنِبِ الْوُجْهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ

“When any one of fights his brother, let him avoid the face, for Allah created Adam in His image.” Muslim (2612)

The above hadith are authentic and are an exemplary proof of humankind been made in the image of God. Various classes of scholars have explained the phrase ‘image of god’ in a different way. The vast majority of scholars have described this as correct and go on to say that not only image, Allah ﷻ uses the words like hands, feet, descent, ascent for Himself though he is pure from having anything like these so what to infer from these quotations is a heated debate among scholars. Some of the opinions are:

- 1) One should believe in these as truth but not go into the depth of meaning, as human intelligence cannot grasp it.
- 2) The phrase ‘in his image’ refers to Adam ؑ and not to Allah ﷻ so there is no need to discuss further.
- 3) Allah ﷻ created Adam ؑ with ability to see, hear, and speak and so on. All these qualities are present in Allah ﷻ also but there is not any similarity or equality between the two. Allah ﷻ is ‘Aleem’ (knowledgeable) and man also has knowledge but can anybody compare the two, the former is

inherent, infinite and boundless while the latter is a miniscule, extremely limited, and not inherent. This is with other attributes also. Since both possess a trait, which sounds same, hence, the two have been apparently associated but there is no comparison between the two.

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (42:11)

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

And there is none co equal or comparable unto Him (112:4)

This may be the reason for some scholars to call the man as the manifestation of the attributes of Allah ﷻ. That means the attributes of Allah ﷻ can be comprehended by understanding the structure and the functioning of the human being.

4) The phrase ‘in his image’ refers to Allah ﷻ itself and Imam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله says that there is almost a consensus that this refers to Allah alone and to deduce some other meaning is complete ignorance. His opinion is that whatever exists has to have some form or shape along with attributes and that applies to Allah as well. However, man is unable to comprehend the details of the same. If something is in the form of other then it does not mean that the two are similar. In one hadith, the people who enter paradise have been compared to that of moon but the two cannot be similar.

“The first group to enter Paradise will be in the image of the moon” (Bukhari 3245)

This means that this blessed lot will be in human form, but because of their purity, beauty and brightness of

face they will look like the moon, but will not resemble it. Thus man got established as viceroy of the Creator so everything around was made subjugated to him and he in turn has to play the role of following and establishing the divine commands. After creation, he lived in heaven for sometime and by a divine plan was made to move to Earth for achieving the goals, which the Lord had set for him. In this journey on Earth, he was never left to himself by his creator but always has been receiving divine instructions through the messengers of God. The Lord chooses amongst the humankind as his messengers who have the job of teaching other people divine laws and connect the humanity, which is lost in the quagmire of the material world to their Lord.

In holy Qur'an, man is called 'dignified' by the Lord so we must stand true to the inherent quality kept in us by the Lord. Lord says,

لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ

كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا

We have certainly dignified the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided them with good things and preferred them over much of what We have created with decisive preference. (17:70)

The humankind is dignified much more than any other creation as far as both external and internal faculties are concerned. The appearance of human being is better than any other creature. The finesse of doing work with his hands is not seen in anyone else. Their faculties of language, speech, reasoning, intelligence are un parallel. In fact, creatures have been graded in three forms as far as intelligence and reason is

concerned. Common animals have desires but no reason and intelligence (as compared to man). The angels have reason and intelligence, but do not have desires. Human beings have both. They have reason and intelligence as well as desires. This is the reason why, when he suppresses his desires through reason and intelligence and succeeds in saving himself from indulging in things disliked by Allah ﷻ, he reaches a station, which is even higher than that of many angels. The stature of common believer is higher than common angels and stature of special believers (messengers) is higher than special angels. However, unfortunate are the humans who have utter disregard for their Lord and do not believe in Him and his messengers and hence fall to the lowest possible level of existence. (Ma'ariful Qur'an)

Various scholars especially mystics have further elaborated on the magnificence of man in their own perspective. Amongst them leading ones are Ghazalli, Tirmidhi, Ibn Arabi ربه and in recent past Dr Muhammad Iqbal ربه. Most of them consider man more or less as a microcosm and produce numerous arguments to substantiate their view.

Imam Ghazalli ربه gave the concept that the entire universe is the meaning of 'His image' and man is a copy of the entire universe, so called microcosm. Then he describes the similarity between the man and the universe. On Earth we have trees and in man we see hair, skin is like surface of Earth, blood vessels are like streams, bones are like mountains, sweat is like rain, senses are like stars, hands and feet are like soldiers for body and so on. Just as God exerts his jurisdiction in the entire universe , in the similar way

‘heart, does so in his kingdom of is body wherein outer five senses work for safety of kingdom and inner senses serve even more important function like anger works like police, reason as minister, desire as tax collector. He uses the words like ‘qalb’, ‘ruh’, ‘nafs’ and ‘aql’ in various places but from in depth reading of his books it becomes clear he is using all of them synonymously and all refer to the basic reality or the essence of man.


Other meaning of the phrase ‘of His image’ given by Imam Ghazalli is that the two are homonyms and not synonyms. The similarity between the two is just apparently in names and the reality is entirely different. Just to explain both man and horse are having ‘smartness’ but the smartness of both is not comparable in any way. Hence, the essence of God cannot be known to man nor shared by anyone else.

Since one is ordered to imbibe the Godly attributes (takhlaqu bi ikhlaqi Allah), hence perfection in man is as per the degree of imbibing these qualities are there. He categorizes humankind into following groups according to this feature.

- Animal like are the ones who have heard these names and have not learnt beyond it
- Linguistics understand the meaning of these words as they know the Arabic language
- Scholars believe with conviction that these names belong to Allah

‘Muqarabbin’ in initial stage have understood the meaning of these attributes by unveiling (mukashafa) and perception (mushaida). In the second stage, muqarabeen try to admire these attributes and then desire to possess these

attributes as much as possible. Hence, they acquire nearness to their Lord in this way. In final stage, they strive their best to adorn themselves with these attributes and adorn themselves with these. The nearness to the Lord and hence 'perfection' is directly proportional to their amount of adorning these attributes.

Ibn Arabi  to some extent also describes man a perfect creation of the Lord and does ascribe to microcosm theory described by Ghazalli albeit with subtle differences. Lord, however, remained hidden and desired to manifest himself as is documented in a famous quote, "I was a hidden treasure and I wished to be known." Therefore, Lord called forth the entire creation into being by His command. Hence, whatever we see around is a manifestation of some attribute of Lord. The highest manifestation of the Divine is the human being as he is an embodiment of everything else seen in the universe so the term 'microcosm' is used for him. He is of the opinion that whatever exists in the universe has something of it in man, and obviously a part of it or in certain aspects only. He tries to explain this by pondering on any existent in universe and looking for the dominant attribute in it. Whatever is the result, he is of the opinion that one will find it in some man. When God wanted to create the perfect man, He combined for man all the realities in the universe and then manifested Himself to it in his all names. Thus, man attained both the divine image and the creature image. Since man possesses the manifestation of all the attributes of Lord, so he is the true vicegerent of the universe. This status is inherently present in every person unless he loses it by neglecting the role of vicegerent and that happens when he

fails to obey the commandments of Lord. In case man loses this stature, he is just an apparent form of man but worse than animal.

Thus, the perfect man is the heart of the universe and the universe expresses everything other than Lord. It is the heart of perfect man, which can accommodate the manifestations of Lord. There is a famous saying amongst the gnostics that the Lord says, *“Neither the Earth nor the heaven contains Me but the heart of pious believer contains Me”*. The words are not exactly in hadith but in some Israeli narrations and Allama Zarkashi رحمہ اللہ says about these narrations that they may be quoted if supported by some authentic narration (Al-La-alil Manthurah fil Ahadithil Mash-hurah of Zarkashi, hadith; 111)

In support of above, Allama Sakhawi رحمہ اللہ in Al-Maqasidul Hasanah has brought forth an hadith from Tabrani which has similar meaning

عَنْ أَبِي عَنَبَةَ الْحَوْلَانِيِّ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ آيَةً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ وَآيَةُ رَبِّكُمْ قُلُوبُ عِبَادِهِ الصَّالِحِينَ وَأَحَبُّهَا إِلَيْهِ أَلْيَنُهَا وَأَرْفَقُهَا

مسند الشاميين للطبراني—849] الحديث الألباني خلاصة حكم المحدث إسناده قوى في

[السلسلة الصحيحة 1691]

Abu Inabah رحمہ اللہ reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Verily, Allah has vessels among the people of the Earth, and the vessels of your Lord are the hearts of his righteous servants. The most beloved of them to him are the softest and most tender of them.”[Musnad al-Shamiyyin 840. Imam Al-Albani رحمہ اللہ has graded this hadith as strong (qawi)]

The word of caution here is that the concept of heart containing Allah refers to the understanding (marifat) and the love for Allah ﷻ and not the physical dimensions.

Hence it is proven without any doubt that the heart of a pious believer is the favorite destination for the tajali (theophany) of Allah ﷻ. In receiving the theophany, heart is not the only creation but one of them but the nature and the quantum received is unparalleled. This is explained by a famous scholar Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ by comparing heart with the arsh (throne of Allah). He says, “The greatest dignified substance in entire ‘alam-e-kabir’ (entire creation) is ‘arsh-e-majeed’ and it’s share in the manifestations of Lord (tajalli) is far higher than the manifestations (tajalliat) of other elements because it is complete and full (jame’y). The (arsh-e-majeed) assembles the manifestation (zuhur) of names (asmaa) and attributes (sifaat) and ‘Essence of Allah’ ﷻ and that manifestation (tajalli) (of arsh-e-majeed) is permanent and lasting. There is no room of disappearing in it. The heart of a perfect man (insan-e-kamil) has relevancy (munasibat) with the throne (arsh-e-majeed) and is said as throne of Allah (arsh-ul-Allah). It has abundant share and perfect fortune from the manifestation of throne (tajalli-e-arshi).” But the magnanimity of human heart is greater than the arsh in one sense that the heart recognizes the Creator because of the inherent qualities in it bestowed by Allah ﷻ enabling it to come closer to Allah ﷻ by longing for the Lord while as ‘Arsh’ does not have this quality. May Allah ﷻ bless all of us to understand this great bounty provided by our Lord ! Aameen.

Conclusion

The rational faculties present inside the man are the essence of him. Since these faculties are not made up of matter hence their understanding becomes a mammoth task. In the current science driven society the seekers of the reality find themselves in tricky situation. Once they talk of those things which science cannot explain world calls them insane and if they apply the scientific principles to the study of the spirituality, they fail. The study of spirituality is beyond the realms of science as the subject of study in science is matter and spirituality is beyond matter. It is analogous to using an eye to hear sounds and once eye fails to comprehend the sound one refuses the existence of sound. But the sound exists, only one has to open one's ears to hear them. So by using the innate inner capabilities, along with the divine guidance from Allah ﷻ, the reality will unfold. It is a pity that man reached the moon but fails to peep inside himself to see the wonders lying inside him.

The animals are always busy in eating, sleeping and fighting; so if one is busy in these things he is just like an animal. Devils are busy in stirring up mischief; if one is busy in these things he is just like a devil. Angels contemplate the beauty of God, and are entirely free from animal qualities; if one is busy in these things he is just like an angel. But human

being is above all of them as he has the potential to do all of these works. These bad potentials have been kept in a human being with a purpose and that is to assess whether these are used for the selected use as special tools by a person in certain situations or one becomes a prey to becoming engrossed in them and forgetting his real mission in life.

The first step to know about oneself is to study his external body as has been described in medical books and this knowledge is also of great benefit as understanding the marvels inside the body leads one to ponder upon the majesty of the Creator. But this amount of knowledge alone will not lead one to the reality of man as once a man dies the body disintegrates and this alone cannot be the end of the best creation of Allah ﷻ. So the need arises to introspect into the inner faculties so as to understand the purpose of life on Earth. In this nobody can achieve bliss without the divine guidance of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The path is tricky and just a little mistake in understanding will lead a man to eternal disaster. So whosoever seeks the knowledge using the light from the prophet hood will reach his destination quickly and successfully without any risks of going astray. These teachings have been used to form the basis of understanding the essence of man. We need to study ourselves in a comprehensive manner beyond that what is taught by the medical schools. The inside of human has a hidden micro cosmos as some mystics say:

What is in universe is in Adam

But what is in Adam is not in the universe

The inside treasures of human being have been studied by the great genius whom current day people hardly know as

the mundane pursuit of excellence in money, power and fame has blinded mankind to a major extent. There is a need to open our eyes to the unseen and unravel the mysteries of man. Once one gets busy in these he will not have any time to waste on useless things...

There is a famous incident of a great saint namely Ibrahim ibn Adham رحمته الله. Sharik said that he asked Ibrahim ibn Adham رحمته الله about what had happened between Ali عليه السلام and Muaawiya عليه السلام (two companions of holy prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم who had some difference of opinion in certain issues), he wept and raised his head and said, “Truly, whoever knows himself remains busy with himself and whoever knows his Lord remains busy with his Lord away from anything and anyone else.”

Once one is busy in understanding the self he immediately gets busy in understanding his Lord and both are such an expansive fields of knowledge which are without limits.

May Allah سبحانه remove the veils of ignorance from us and leads us to understanding ourselves which in turn is the key to understanding Allah سبحانه as is the famous saying:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

He who knows himself knows his Lord

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KNOW THE MAN

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ABOUT THE BOOK

The book is an endeavor to depict the essence of a man which consists of the hidden and intricate faculties inside him far beyond the sphere of vision. In this human being is analyzed from the view-point of science, philosophy and religion to decipher the hidden treasures inside him. The innate faculties present in a human being are unexplored despite the man having reached some celestial bodies. The query about the essence of man is important as it will unravel a number of mysteries deeply enshrined in his existence like Why is he here? Where is he going? What will happen to him after his death? Who is the Creator and Sustainer of everything? All these and many more questions are intriguing to everybody and are deeply connected to the understanding of the essence of man. The quintessence of a man is beyond the sphere of study of science as this is not made of matter and science cannot go beyond matter. Hence, in the current era of materialism and the quest to analyze everything with the rationale of scientific hypothesis, man is lost in search of himself. In the absence of the knowledge of self, man is at a colossal loss as he fails to achieve a blissful life in this world and the next.



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